



Hacettepe University School of Social Sciences
Department of English Linguistics

**ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH ARTICLE SYSTEM
BY SPEAKERS OF TURKISH IN THE EFL SETTING**

Glin Dađdeviren

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2010

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KABUL VE ONAY

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BİLDİRİM

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Gülin Dağdeviren

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ÖZET

DAĞDEVİREN, Gülin. *İngilizcenin Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenildiği Ortamda İngilizce Tanımlık Dizgesinin Türk Konuşucular Tarafından Edinimi*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2010.

Bu çalışma başlıca Türkçe anadil konuşucularının ikinci dil olarak edindikleri İngilizcedeki tanımlık tercihlerini incelemektedir. Katılımcıların yanıtları belirlilik, özgüllük ve tikellik olan anlamsal özellikler açısından analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışma ayrıca katılımcıların tanımlık tercihlerinde ikinci dil olarak edindikleri İngilizcedeki yeterlilik seviyelerine göre farklılık gösterip göstermediğini araştırmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada kullanılan veri toplama aracı altı tip cümleyi içeren boşluk doldurma testidir. Boşluk doldurma testindeki cümle tipleri [+belirli, -tikel, +özümlü], [+belirli, -tikel, -özümlü], [-belirli, -tikel, +özümlü], [-belirli, -tikel, -özümlü], [-belirli, +tikel, +özümlü] and [-belirli, +tikel, -özümlü] olan anlamsal bağlamlardır. Test 30 düşük yeterlilik ve 30 yüksek yeterlilik seviyesindeki katılımcılara uygulanmıştır.

Boşluk doldurma testinin sonuçları, anadil Türkçe konuşucularının *belirliliği* gösteren bir dil olan İngilizcedeki [+belirli] ve [-belirli] ad öbeklerini birbirinden ayırabildiklerini göstermiştir. Çalışmanın katılımcıları [+özümlü], [-özümlü] ve [+tikel], [-tikel] bağlamdaki tanımlık tercihlerinde başarılı bulunmuştur. Katılımcılar, ad öbeklerinin belirliliğini göz önünde bulundurarak başarılı bir şekilde tanımlıkları gereken bağlamlara yerleştirmişlerdir. Tanımlıkların aşırı kullanımları analiz edildiğinde, altı anlamsal bağlamda doğruluk oranlarının aşırı kullanım oranlarını geçtiği bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmanın farklı yeterlilik seviyelerindeki katılımcıların tanımlık kullanımlarını da incelediği düşünüldüğünde, mevcut çalışmanın sonuçlarının yeterliliğin ikinci dil olarak edinilen İngilizcedeki tanımlık tercihlerindeki rolünü kanıtlayan önceki alanyazın ile aynı doğrultuda olduğu görülür.

Anahtar sözcükler: İngilizce tanımlıklar, tanımlık tercihi, belirlilik, özgüllük, tikellik.

ABSTRACT

DAĞDEVİREN, Gülin. *Acquisition of the English article system by speakers of Turkish in the EFL setting*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2010.

This study mainly investigates L1-Turkish speakers' article choice in L2-English. In the study participants' answers were analyzed on the basis of the following semantic features: *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity*. This study also examines whether the article choice of the participants varies according to their proficiency levels in L2-English.

The data collection instrument adopted in this study was a fill-in-the-blanks test which included six types of sentences. The sentence types in the test represent the six types of semantic contexts which are [+definite, -partitive, +specific], [+definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, -partitive, +specific], [-definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and [-definite, +partitive, -specific]. The test was administered to 30 low-proficiency and 30 high-proficiency level participants.

The results of the fill-in-the-blanks test showed that L1-Turkish speakers could discriminate between [+definite] and [-definite] noun phrases in English, a language which marks *definiteness*. The participants of the study were proved to be successful at choosing the correct article in the [+specific], [-specific] and [+partitive], [-partitive] contexts. The participants successfully provided the articles to the obligatory contexts considering the *definiteness* of the noun phrases. When the overuses of the articles were analyzed, it was found that the accuracy rates outnumbered the rates of overuse of the articles in the six semantic contexts. Considering that this study also investigates the article choice of the participants of different proficiency levels, it is clear that the results of the current study are in the line with the previous literature which evidences the role of proficiency in the article choice in L2-English.

Key words: English articles, article choice, definiteness, specificity, partitivity

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABL	Ablative Case
ACC	Accusative Case
AGR	Agreement marker
AOR	Aorist
ART	Article
DAT	Dative Case
DBE	Department of Basic English
df	degree of freedom
DP	Determiner Phrase
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ENG	English
ESL	English as a Second Language
ENUM	Enumerator
GEN	Genitive Case
HK	Hearer Knowledge
ILG	Interlanguage Grammar
INF	Infinitival
LOC	Locative
L1	Language 1 (First Language)
L2	Language 2 (Second Language)
METU	Middle East Technical University
N	Population Size
NP	Noun Phrase
OBJP	Object Participle
p	significance level
PASS	Passive
PF	Perfective
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive
PROG	Progressive

SD	Standart Deviation
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SR	Specific Referent
t	t-distribution
UG	Universal Grammar
1 PL	First Person Plural
3 PL	Third Person Plural
2 SG	Second Person Singular
3 SG	Third Person Singular
\bar{X}	Arithmetic mean

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. 1. INTRODUCTION

Languages are studied on the basis of certain features which help to describe and analyze them on phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic level. Among these, semantic features are criterial features denoting discrete properties which represent necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be an instance of a category (Lipka, 1986). Articles are one of these categories which include [+ART] and [-ART] classifications. Juvonen (2000:14) proposed a categorization of natural languages on the basis of *definiteness*, a semantic feature.

languages with the category of definite articles only
 languages with the category of indefinite articles only
 languages with both definite and indefinite article categories
 languages with neither category

The classifications above categorize languages on the basis of a grammaticized means to mark the *definiteness* or *indefiniteness*. Apart from the classification of article systems across the languages, cross-linguistic interlanguage analysis of article system has given way to many studies. Looking at the history of L2-English article system acquisition studies, it is seen that cross sectional morpheme acquisition studies have shed light on second language studies. The order of the English morphemes acquired by speakers of other languages has been reported by many studies. The basic premise of these studies is to investigate whether first or second language learners follow a consistent order in the use of grammatical morphemes (Dulay and Burt, 1974; Bailey, Madden & Krashen, 1974; Larsen-Freeman, 1975; among others). When these studies are examined in detail, it is seen that speakers of Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Japanese and Persian produced a similar order of acquisition for the same set of English morphemes. English articles placed among the morphemes with the highest ranks of use. However, some longitudinal and cross-sectional studies showed that articles were

acquired relatively late (Dulay and Burt, 1974; Bailey, Madden & Krashen, 1974; Larsen-Freeman, 1975; among others). In his study, Fathman (1975) found that the performance of Spanish and Korean children differed on the basis of one morpheme class which was articles. The results of Hakuta's (1976) longitudinal study were in the line with Fathman's (1975) research. The five-year-old Japanese subject of Hakuta (1976) acquired articles late when compared with her Spanish counterparts. Studying the evidence of Spanish native speakers' acquisition of articles, Andersen (1977) proposed that Spanish participants transferred articles from the Spanish syntax. When Korean and Japanese are studied in terms of the availability of articles in the syntax of these languages, it is apparent that Korean and Japanese lack articles. While natural order studies brought the role of innately guided knowledge into question, some other studies raised the debate of the role of L1 (Dechert & Raupach, 1989; Odlin, 1989; Gass & Selinker, 1992; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994; 1996; Schwartz, 1998; among others).

The acquisition of the English article system is one of the most extensively studied areas in second language acquisition studies. One reason of this subject's popularity among the studies is due to the fact that *the* and *a* are among the free morphemes that occur mostly frequently in English (Sinclair, 1991). Secondly, the English article system is observed to be problematic for the speakers of other languages (Goto-Butler 2002; Berry 1991; Master, 1987; 1988; Thomas, 1989; Yamada & Matsuura, 1982). First studies are mainly based on the classification of English article system. Bickerton (1981) presented a wheel which was marked by the semantic features which were *referentiality* and *definiteness*. Based on Bickerton's (1981) model, Huebner (1983) developed a semantic wheel and suggested four semantic categories. Later studies used the taxonomies of Bickerton (1981) and Huebner (1983) in order to investigate the use of the English article system by the speakers of other languages on the basis of the UG-based approach, the role of L1, the proficiency levels and the task types.

1. 2. THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Studies concerning article use in L2-English have focused on different aspects of acquisition. Article use has been studied on the basis of the acquisition of the first language and the second language, the acquisition patterns in different taxonomies of

the English article system, the role of different L1s and the role of Universal Grammar (UG), the pedagogical implications, etc. Early studies mainly focused on the classification of the English article system. Bickerton (1981) emphasized the semantic function of the noun phrase, and classified the English articles in terms of *specific reference* [SR] and *hearer knowledge* [HK] references. Huebner (1983) made a classification based on Bickerton's (1981) taxonomy. In Huebner's (1983) classification, two aspects of semantic features, which were discussed in Bickerton (1981), gave rise to four basic NP contexts which included Type 1 [-SR, +HK] generics marked with *the*, *a* and *zero article*; Type 2 [+SR, +HK] referential definites marked with *the*; Type 3 [+SR, -HK] first mention nouns marked with *a* or *zero article* and Type 4 [-SR, -HK] non-referentials marked with *a* or *zero article*. Goto-Butler (2002) and Thomas (1989) also suggested Type 5 for idiomatic expressions and conventional uses.

These studies, which built the background of the current study, were made by Ionin and others. In their study, Ionin et al. (2003) investigated the relationship between article semantics and the article choice in L2-English and found that errors in L2-English article use were not random and they resulted in the learners' interpretation of English articles on the basis of *specificity* rather than *definiteness*. In their further study, Ionin et al. (2008), where they analyzed the sources of linguistic knowledge in the second language acquisition in relation to the English article system, found that there were three factors playing an important role in the acquisition of English articles. The first one was *L1-transfer* which was said to be effective while transferring the article semantics from L1. The others were *UG-access* and *input processing*, the former told possible patterns of article choice in a natural language and the latter told the appropriate pattern among *definiteness* and *specificity*. *Partitivity*, as a semantic feature, was investigated by Ko et al. (2008) on two typologically different L1 groups and it was found that L2-article choice reflected the learner's access to semantic universals. In the light of these findings, the current study was carried out to test whether the results of the present study agree with the previous ones on the basis of the use of English articles.

1. 3. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Article use in L2-English has been one of the most studied subjects in second language acquisition studies. The reason why articles have been the objective of a considerable amount of research emerges from its challenging use for L2 English learners. Master (2002) claimed that the difficulties which the learners experienced stemmed from three major factors. The first one is the fact that the articles are said to be among the free morphemes that occur most frequently in English (Master, 1997). According to Sinclair (1991), COBUILD (Collins Birmingham University International Language Database) found that *the* is the most frequent word while article *a* is the fifth most frequent word in a corpus of 20 million words. The second factor is that function words are normally unstressed, consequently, are difficult. The third factor is that in the article system, a single morpheme has many functions which bear difficulty for a L2-English learner who generally looks for one-form-one-function correspondence.

In spite of the fact that a great number of studies have been conducted on the use of articles in L2-English by the speakers of other languages, there are few studies investigating L1-Turkish speakers' article choice in L2-English. These studies mainly examine article use in certain contexts on the basis of proficiency levels of the participants and the tasks adopted. However, looking at the types of contexts, it is apparent that *partitivity* has not been discussed and tested as a semantic feature.

The present study aims to examine article use in L2-English by L1-Turkish speakers. The participants' article choice was discussed on the basis of *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity*. These semantic features were investigated through different levels of proficiency. The test administered was remodeled after Ionin et al.'s (2009) test which previously used for the article choice in L2-English by the speakers of other languages.

1. 4. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the current study is to investigate Turkish speakers' article use in L2-English. The investigation was carried out for the purpose of examining the participants' overuse and accuracy of the English article system on the basis of the semantic features which are *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity*.

1. 5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Article use in L2-English of L1-Turkish speakers was previously analyzed. These studies investigated L1-Turkish speakers' performance on the basis of task types, certain article environments and proficiency levels. The current research adopts a study design investigating L2-English article choice on the basis of some similar and different aspects. This study addresses the following questions:

- 1) How do L1-Turkish speakers mark *definiteness* in [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and [+definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences?

The findings of the some of the previous studies show that the participants overuse *a/an* or *zero article* in definite environments. It also reveals that the participants are more accurate at marking [+definite, -partitive, +specific] contexts.

- 2) How do L1-Turkish speakers mark *indefiniteness* in [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and [-definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences?

The results concerning the article use in certain contexts report that the participants are more accurate at marking *indefiniteness*. On the other hand, according to a hypothesis, the learners of L2-English may associate *specificity* with *the*, thus the participants would be expected to use *the* in [-definite, -partitive, +specific] environments.

- 3) How do L1-Turkish speakers mark *indefiniteness* in [+partitive] sentences?

Partitivity in L2-English of L1-Turkish speakers has not been studied; therefore a prediction based on the previous accounts cannot be made. However, according to the studies concerning L2-English of other languages, the participants tend to overuse *the* in [+partitive] or [+specific] environments and the use of *the* increases when the environment is both partitive and specific.

4) Does accuracy of article use vary in all types of sentences with respect to proficiency level?

The studies in L2-English show that the proficiency level affects the use of certain structures in the interlanguage. This is explained by the participants' use of different strategies while representing these structures in their L2-English.

In sum, the current study answers the research questions formulated above on the basis of the previous accounts on L2-English of the speakers of L1-Turkish and of other languages, and the hypothesis concerning *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity* and L2-English performance of different proficiency levels.

1. 6. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The use of articles is one of the most frequently investigated issues in second language acquisition studies. The variety in the choice of article use by the speakers of different L1s has been the motivation for the studies. The current study was conducted to investigate article use in L2-English by the speakers of L1-Turkish. The importance of the study emerges from the L1 of the participants, testing of *partitivity* as a semantic feature and the test instrument administered.

Firstly, the difference of the current study from the previous ones is the investigation of the use of articles in [+partitive] environments by L1-Turkish speakers. When looked at the studies concerning the use of the articles in [+partitive] contexts, the lack of studies on the article uses of L1-Turkish speakers can be easily seen. Therefore this study aims to shed light on further studies concerning *partitivity* effect in the interlanguage of L1-Turkish speakers.

Secondly, the test instrument which was remodeled after Ionin et al.'s (2009) test, presented data about L1-Turkish speaker's article use in certain semantic contexts. In other words, this test, of which various forms were used to elicit data from the speakers of other languages, provided data for the current research. Data elicited from different languages using a similar format may provide more reliable and valid discussion about the universality of the certain uses of the article choice.

Some of the previous studies focused on the pedagogical implications of article acquisition in L2-English (Whitman, 1974; Lindstromberg, 1986; Master, 1990; Berry, 1991; among others). This research is expected to contribute to studies concerning the teaching of English as a foreign language. Curriculum planners can make use of errors that L1-Turkish speakers make when using the English article system and they can redesign the related parts of the curriculum.

1. 7. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study aims to investigate the article choice in L2-English of L1-Turkish learners. The study obtained answers to the questions posed concerning article use. In spite of the fact that the research reached its aims, it would be better to revisit some of points.

As mentioned before, the participants of the study were all adult L2-English learners. Therefore, this study does not focus on the article use in the L2-English of child speakers of Turkish. The review of literature and hypotheses proposed for child L2-English learners were not included in the study.

One of the limitations of the study is the number of participants. Sixty learners participated in the current study. For a further study, data collection from more than 60 participants would be more reliable for drawing conclusions from a limited number of learners' use of articles may not be feasible. Another point that ought to be developed is the lack of a proficiency level in between low- and high-proficiency levels. The inclusion of an intermediate proficiency level to the study would likely increase the understanding of the patterns of article acquisition in L2-English.

Another shortcoming of the present study is the fact that only one test instrument was adopted. As mentioned before, in this study a 40-item written elicitation task was administered to the participants. Participants were asked to fill in the blanks with the appropriate structure where they thought necessary. However, more valid and reliable conclusions could be drawn using a written elicitation task supported by oral production and free-writing tasks. According to Towell et al. (1996), oral L2 production tasks provide evidence about the L2-learner's implicit knowledge, while written production

tasks give evidence of explicit knowledge. The performance of participants in these tasks would be more similar to their naturalistic performance.

The analysis of *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity* as semantic features adopted from Ko et al. (2008) in this study. In other words, other classifications of English article system were ignored.

The limitations of this study may have affected the interpretation of the results. Further research which adopts test instruments of both spoken and written performance may produce different results concerning article use in L2-English of L1-Turkish speakers. This might especially be true if the test instruments include more test items per task, and if a greater number of participants are included in the study. In addition to this, including a mid-proficiency level group may also produce different results in the study.

1. 8. SUMMARY

This part of the study includes several sections that constitute the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the aim of the study, research questions, the significance and the limitations of the study. The background of the study shortly summarizes the relevant literature. The statement of the problem section explains why article use in L2-English needs to be investigated. In the aim of the study section the objective of the current research is given. Then, research questions are formulated on the basis of which the study is designed. The significance of the study section explains why this study is worth conducting. Finally, limitations of the study section describes the possible shortcomings limits of the study and explains how these limitations may affect the results.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1. INTRODUCTION

The use of articles in L2-English is a subject that has been extensively investigated for a number of years. The outlines of the studies that have been conducted so far, include the detailed definitions of the study focus which are semantic features available in all of the natural languages and the encoding of these semantic features in languages. Similarly, the literature review of the current study is structured as follows. First, the definitions of the terms *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity* are defined in detail. Secondly, the classification of the English article system based on Bickerton's (1981) taxonomy is presented with Thomas' (1989) contribution to four categories. Thirdly, considering the fact that this study was conducted on the L1-Turkish speakers as the participants, reflections of the semantic features in Turkish are provided for the purpose of investigating the role of L1 in L2-English. And finally, the earlier and more recent studies on the subject are revised so that comparisons can be drawn from the current study in the discussion section.

2. 2. DEFINITENESS, SPECIFICITY AND PARTITIVITY IN ENGLISH

English articles are members of a category called determiners. Determiners are defined by Quirk et al. (1985: 64) as follows:

...word(s) and (sometimes) phrases which determine what kind of reference a noun phrase has.

According to Quirk et al. (1985), there are three classes of determiners: central determiners, predeterminers and postdeterminers. As the focus of this study is articles which belong to the central determiners class, a brief definition of this class is given. Quirk et al. (1985) state that the class of central determiners includes the articles (a, the), demonstratives (e.g. this), possessives (e.g. my, John's), assertives/nonassertives (e.g. some), negatives (i.e. no), universals (e.g. each), nonassertive duals (e.g. either),

negative duals (i.e. neither) and wh-determiners (e.g. which). Master (1993:3) defines features of central determiners as the following:

- 1) they constitute a separate element within the noun phrase (Duscova, 1985 cited in Master, 1993),
- 2) they are an obligatory element in noun phrases,
- 3) they are mutually exclusive (i.e. there can only be one at a time),
- 4) they occupy the initial position within the premodification structure (determiner-modifier-head noun),
- and 5) they form a closed system of items (Klegr, 1978 cited in Master, 1993).

Being a member of the central determiners category, English articles are *the*, *a* and \emptyset (zero article). Hawkins (2001: 232) exemplifies the articles in English as follows:

- (1) a. I should take *the* rabbit to the vet.
- b. I saw *a* rabbit in the garden yesterday.
- c. I saw \emptyset rabbits in the garden yesterday

As stated in Hawkins (2001: 232), English articles have different distributions. The definite article *the* is used with count nouns in both singular and plural, mass nouns and abstract nouns. The definite article *a* is used with singular count nouns and abstract nouns. The \emptyset (zero article) is used with plural count nouns, mass nouns and abstract nouns. The current study adopted the analysis of *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity* proposed by Ionin and Wexler (2002) and Ko et al. (2008).

2. 2. 1. Definiteness

English language marks *definiteness* in its article system. The English article *the* marks [+definite] DPs while the article *a* marks [-definite] DPs (Ko et al., 2008:118). *Definiteness* is defined by Ionin and Wexler (2002:150) as the following:

...a DP is definite iff its referent is known to both speaker and hearer, and is unique in the contextually relevant domain. Otherwise, the DP is indefinite.

As stated in Ionin et al. (2009), regardless of the *specificity* of the context, *the* is used in [+definite] contexts and *a* is used in [-definite] contexts. The sentences taken from Ionin et al. (2009:343) exemplify [+definite, +specific] and [-definite, +specific] contexts, respectively.

- (2) a. I want to talk to **the** winner of this race – she is a good friend of mine.
 b. Professor Robertson is meeting with **a** student from her class – my best friend Alice.

The NP in (2a) receives *the* as it is [+definite]. Similarly, the NP in (2b) receives *a* as it is [-definite]. When two sentences are analyzed on the basis of *specificity*, it is seen that both of them are [+specific]. Then it can be said that it is not *specificity*, but *definiteness* that is marked in English article system.

2. 2. 2. Specificity

Specificity, a semantic feature, is not encoded in the English article system. According to Ko et al. (2008:119) the *specificity* differs from *definiteness* in that only the former is concerned with the speaker's intent. *Specificity* is defined by Ko et al. (2008:119) as the following:

If a Determiner Phrase (DP) of the form [D NP] is [+specific], then the speaker intends to refer to a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP, and considers this individual to possess some noteworthy property.

As the English article system does not encode *specificity*, *the* and *a* can be used in [+specific] and [-specific] sentences. Thus a sentence [+definite, -specific] or [+definite, +specific] receives *the* regardless of its *specificity*. The sentences taken from Ko et al. (2008: 120) exemplify [+specific] and [-specific] contexts, respectively.

- (3) a. I would like to meet **the** author of that book some day – I saw an interview with her on TV, and I really liked her!
 b. I would like to meet **the** author of that painting – unfortunately, I have no idea who it is, since the painting is not signed!

In sentence (3a), the speaker has a particular *author* in his/her mind and intends to refer that *author*, consequently the NP is considered to be [+specific]. However; in (3b) the speaker does not have specific knowledge of the referent and does not have intent to a particular *author* thus NP is considered to be [-specific]. The reason why NPs receive

the is that both of the NPs are [+definite]. In other words, there is uniquely salient referent, which is *author*, shared by the speaker and the hearer.

2. 2. 3. Partitivity

Presuppositionality, as a semantic feature refers to the presupposition of the speaker and the hearer on the existence of a referent. Ko et al. (2008:120) define presuppositionality as the following:

If DP of the form [D NP] is [+presuppositional], then the speaker assumes that the hearer shares the presupposition of the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by NP.

According to Ko et al. (2008), presuppositionality is established in two ways. One of them is by introducing a set that the referent of the target DP belongs to in the previous discourse and the second one is by mutual world knowledge of the speaker and the hearer. Ko et al. (2008:120) focused on the first sub-type of presuppositionality and called it *partitivity*. Presuppositionality is not encoded in the English article system. These sentences, taken from Ko et al. (2008: 120-121), exemplify [-partitive] and [+partitive] contexts, respectively.

- (4) a. He is staying with *a* friend – but he didn't tell me who that is.
 b. This pet shop had five puppies and seven kittens. Finally, John chose *a* puppy.

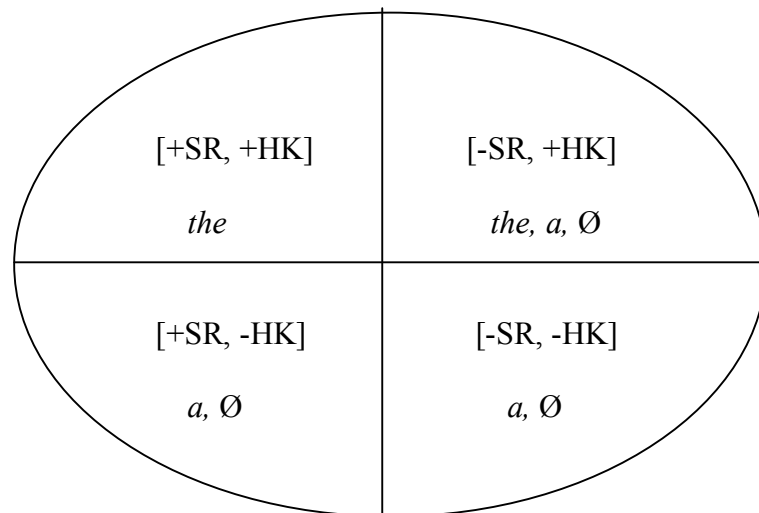
The sentence in (4a) exemplifies the [-partitive] environment as *friend* does not denote an individual that is a member of a set introduced by previous discourse. However, in the sentence (4b) *puppy* is a member of a set, which includes *puppies and seven kittens*, introduced in the previous sentence. The two sentences are indefinite, thus the NPs receive *a*.

2. 3. THE TAXONOMY OF THE ENGLISH ARTICLE SYSTEM

Bickerton's (1981) taxonomy is considered to be the first in the area of English article system research. Bickerton (1981) adopted two binary features to classify English

articles. The first one of these semantic universals is *referentiality* and is symbolized by [\pm Specific Referent]. This semantic feature suggests whether an article and its associated phrase refer to a specific entity (Hawkins, 2001: 233). The second of these semantic universals is *definiteness*, which is symbolized by [\pm Hearer Knowledge]. In Bickerton's taxonomy, *definiteness* suggests whether the article and associated NP (Noun Phrase) are already known via previously introduced discourse or context, to the reader or the listener (Hawkins, 2001: 233). Bickerton developed a semantic wheel to introduce the environments on the basis of [\pm Specific Referent] and [\pm Hearer Knowledge] and articles required for the obligatory environments.

Figure (1) Bickerton's taxonomy (Huebner, 1983)



According to Bickerton's semantic wheel, the two semantic features, [Specific Referent] and [Hearer Knowledge] are divided into four sub-categories. The first one of these categories is [+SR, +HK] environment and requires *the*, the second sub-category is [-SR, +HK] and requires *the, a* or *zero article*. The third environment of Bickerton's (1981) wheel is [+SR, -HK] which requires *a* or *zero article* and the last environment is [-SR, -HK] and requires *a* or *zero article*.

2. 3. 1. [-Specific Referent, +Hearer Knowledge]

If an NP refers to a non-specific entity or entities identified by the hearer from general knowledge of the entity itself, all three articles, *the/a/Ø*, are used. This type of NPs

which define [-SR, +HK] environment, are called *generics* (Hawkins, 2001:235). Additionally, an NP must be countable and singular in order to receive *the*. The sentences taken from (Hawkins, 2001: 235) exemplify *generic* uses.

- (5) Speaker A: I saw a rabbit eating my carrots yesterday.
 Speaker B: **The** rabbit can cause problems for **the** gardener.
A rabbit can cause problems for *a* gardener.
 Ø rabbit can cause problems for Ø gardener.

In (5), Speaker B does not refer to a specific rabbit and a gardener; however a reference to a type of *rabbit* and *gardener*, whose general characteristics are known from our knowledge, can be identified.

2. 3. 2. [+Specific Referent, +Hearer Knowledge]

If an NP refers to a specific entity which the hearer can identify from what has been said before or from the context, *the* is used (Hawkins, 2001:234). An NP which defines [+SR, +HK] environment, is called *referential definite* and receives *the*. The sentences taken from Hawkins (2001: 234) and Goto-Butler (2002:478) exemplify [+SR, +HK] environment.

- (6) a. Speaker A: How will you get a ticket for the England-France match?
 Speaker B: I have a contact.
 Speaker A: Is that **the** same contact who failed to get you tickets for Wimbledon?
- b. Speaker A: What does she want to do when she's married?
 Speaker B: Have a baby?
 Speaker A: What will they do with **the** baby when they go to Africa?
- c. Cut **the** collar of an old shirt.
- d. Write your name on **the** back of an envelope.
- e. There are nine planets traveling around **the** sun.

In (6a) the article and the associated NP are already known from a previous discourse. Speaker A tells Speaker B about the *contact* which they are both familiar with. On the other hand in (6b) Speaker A mentions the *baby* which Speaker B has introduced in this context. Sentences (6c) and (6d) exemplify the type of sentences in which the

accompanying partitive or locative NP is in some sense ‘known’ by virtue of being part of the main NP (Hawkins, 2001: 234). The accompanying partitive NP, which is *collar* in sentence (6c), and the locative NP, which is *back* in sentence (6d), receive *the*. Sentence (6e) exemplifies an NP defining the speaker’s and hearer’s shared general knowledge. The NP, the *sun*, in this sentence receives *the*.

2. 3. 3. [+Specific Referent, -Hearer Knowledge]

If an NP refers to a specific entity, which the hearer cannot identify from what has already been said or from the context, *a* or \emptyset is used. This type of NPs is called *referential indefinites* (Hawkins, 2001: 235). Additionally, an NP must be singular to receive *a* and plural to receive \emptyset . These sentences taken from Hawkins (2001:235) exemplify *referential indefinites*.

(7) Speaker A: How will you get a ticket for the England-France match?
Speaker B: I have *a* contact / I have \emptyset contacts.

The NP, (a) contact(s), in sentence (7) is specific; however, it is the first mention of the NP in the discourse. In other words, Speaker B, introduces ‘his/her contact(s)’ for the first time in the conversation.

2. 3. 4. [-Specific Referent, -Hearer Knowledge]

If an NP refers to a non-specific entity which the hearer cannot identify from what has already been said, or from the context, *a* or \emptyset is used (Hawkins, 2001:234). This type of NPs is called *non-referentials*. When the NP is singular, it receives *a*; otherwise it receives \emptyset . These sentences taken from Hawkins (2001: 234) exemplify *non-referentials*.

(8) Speaker A: What does she want to do when she’s married?
Speaker B: Have *a* baby / Have \emptyset babies.

In sentence (8), the Speaker B does not have a specific *baby* in his/her mind. Additionally, it is the first mention in the discourse and not known to the Speaker A. As seen above when the NP is singular, it has received *a* but when it is plural it has received \emptyset .

2. 3. 5. Idioms and Other Conventional Uses

In Thomas' (1989) study the category of *idioms and other conventional uses* was added to the classification of the English article system. This type of NPs receives all three articles which are *the/a/∅*. These sentences taken from Goto-Butler (2002: 479) exemplify *idioms and other conventional uses*.

- (9) a. All of *a* sudden, he woke up from his coma.
 b. In *the* 1960s, there were lots of protests against the Vietnam War.
 c. He has been thrown out of work, and his family is now living \emptyset hand to mouth.

In the sentences above, the NPs have received *the*, *a* or \emptyset . This type of sentences includes idioms and other conventional uses of which NPs receive all three articles.

2. 4. DEFINITENESS, SPECIFICITY AND PARTITIVITY IN TURKISH

Turkish, as stated in Tura (1986:165), does not have a systematic way of marking the statuses of noun phrases overtly which function as subjects and predicates in Turkish non-verbal sentences. According to Tura (1986), the extralinguistic and linguistic contexts in which NPs are used play an important role in the interpretation.

2. 4. 1. Definiteness

Göksel and Kerslake (2005: 371) define *definiteness* as a state in which the speaker assumes a specific entity or entities are unambiguously identifiable by the hearer.

According to Kornfilt (1997:273) and Underhill (1987:38), *definiteness* in Turkish is not marked morphologically, as there is no definite article. Göksel and Kerslake (2005) state that NPs in Turkish are interpreted as definite when 1) an indefinite determiner is absent, 2) there is accusative case marking where the noun phrase is functioning as direct object and 3) there is a noun phrase including one of the definite determiners. These sentences, taken from Göksel and Kerslake (2005:371-372), exemplify *definiteness* in Turkish.

- (10) a. [Garson] [temiz tabak-lar]-ı [masa]-ya koydu.
waiter clean plate-PL-ACC table-DAT
'The waiter put the clean plates down on the table.'
- b. Bana [bu oda]-yı ver-di-ler.
I (DAT) this room-ACC give-PF-3PL
'They have given me [this room].'

In sentence (10a) three of the noun phrases are definite. The first and the third of the NPs, which are *garson* and *masa*, are not preceded by an indefinite determiner. On the other hand the second NP is definite, as *temiz tabaklar* is marked for the accusative case which shows that the NP is identifiable by the speaker and the hearer. In sentence (10b) the noun phrase includes one of the definite determiners, which is *bu*. Functioning as direct objects, the NPs with demonstratives, a sub-category of definite determiners, are interpreted as definite. Kornfilt (1997) suggests that demonstratives can occur with the abstract nouns and proper names for contrast. These NPs are interpreted as definite. Göksel and Kerslake (2005) state that some classes of NPs are inherently interpreted as definite. The sentences below are taken from Göksel and Kerslake (2005: 371-372).

- (11) a. *Ankara*'yı severim.
'I like *Ankara*.'
- b. Murat *seni* seviyor.
'Murat loves *you*.'
- c. Şunları da yıkamamız lazım.
'We've got to wash *these*, too.'
- d. Ömer *herkesi* sinirlendirdi.
'Ömer got on *everyone*'s nerves.'
- e. Pek *kimseyi* görmüyorum.

'I don't see *anyone* much.'

f. Bir anahtar burada, *öbürünü* gördün mü?
'One key is here; have you seen *the other (one)*?'

Sentence in (11a) includes a proper name of a place, *Ankara*. Thus, the NP is interpreted as definite. According to Göksel and Kerslake (2005), proper names of people, places and institutions are inherently definite. Göksel and Kerslake (2005) add that if an NP includes a personal pronoun like *you* (11b), a demonstrative pronoun like *şunlar* (11c), a pronominal quantifier like *herkes* or *her şey* (11d), an interrogative like *kim(ler)* and the expression *kimse* (11e), *öbürü/öteki* and their plural forms *öbürleri/ötekiler* (11f), it is interpreted as definite.

Kornfilt (1997) states that *indefiniteness* is marked in Turkish via the indefinite determiner *bir* (a), which is the same lexical item *bir* (one) and indefinite quantifiers like *bazı* (some) for plural nouns. Kornfilt (1997) points out that the numeral *bir* and the indefinite determiner *bir* differ from each other on the basis of their position. These sentences taken from Kornfilt (1997: 275) exemplify numeral *bir* and indefinite *bir*, respectively.

- (12) a. bir çürük elma
 one rotten apple
 'one rotten apple'
- b. çürük *bir* elma
 rotten an apple
 'a rotten apple'

In (12a), *bir* is a numeral and placed before an adjectival phrase; however in (12b) *bir* is an indefinite determiner following the adjective and preceding the noun. Göksel and Kerslake (2005: 372) add that:

A noun phrase that includes a cardinal and distributive numeral is also interpreted as definite unless (i) a definite determiner is also present, or the noun phrase is followed by the clitic *dA*. Finally, noun phrases... marked with the plural suffix – *lar* have indefinite status in some contexts.

The sentences taken from Göksel and Kerslake (2005:372) exemplify the conditions given above.

- (13) a. Çekmecede bir defter bulduk.
 drawer-LOC a notebook find-PF-1PL
 ‘We found *a* notebook in the drawer.’
- b. Çekmecede dört (tane) defter bulduk.
 four ENUM notebook
 ‘We found *four* notebooks in the drawer.’
- c. Çekmecede defter-ler bulduk.
 notebook-PL
 ‘We found notebooks in the drawer.’
- d. Çekmecede *birtakım* defter-ler bulduk.
 some notebook-PL
 ‘We found *some* notebooks in the drawer.’

The sentences above have indefinite interpretations. Sentence (13a) has an indefinite *bir* preceding the noun, while in (13b) a cardinal numeral and an enumerator are present. In (13c) the NP includes neither a determiner nor a numeral but is marked with plural suffix. Sentence (13d) includes an indefinite quantifier which is *birtakım*.

2. 4. 2. Specificity

As mentioned before an NP is specific when the speaker has an individual in his/her mind as its referent (Hellan, 1981 and Ioup, 1977 cited in Enç, 1991). Enç (1991) states that the *specificity* is marked via the use of some adjectives in some languages, while the overt case morphology is used to mark *specificity* in the other languages. According to Enç (1991:4), Turkish is a language that marks *specificity* with the overt case morphology. To exemplify, if indefinites are in the object position, they can be specific or non-specific. However, if the NP has the accusative case marker, it is interpreted as specific. The sentences taken from Enç (1991:4-5) exemplify the phenomenon in Turkish.

- (14) a. Ali bir piyano-yu kiralamak istiyor.
 Ali one piyano-ACC to rent wants
 ‘Ali wants to rent a certain piano’
- b. Ali bir piyano kiralamak istiyor.
 ‘Ali wants to rent a (nonspecific) piano.’

The sentence (14a) includes an NP that is marked with the accusative case marker. As mentioned before, in Turkish the accusative case morpheme in *piyanoyu* is interpreted as specific. In other words, *Ali* wants a particular piano not an ordinary one. However, in (14b), the lack of the accusative marker in the NP is interpreted as non-specific. In sentence (14b) *Ali*'s wish is not directed a particular *piano*.

According to Kornfilt (1997), the distinction with referential and non-referential *indefiniteness* is clear in the sentences with the accusative and genitive case markers occurring with referential and non-referential NPs. The sentences taken from Kornfilt (1997: 278) exemplify the difference in the interpretation.

- (15) a. dün Hasan-in tavsiye et-tiğ -i birkaç kitab-ı
okudum.
yesterday Hasan-GEN recommend -OBJP -3SG a few book-ACC
- b. dün Hasan-in tavsiye et-tiğ -i birkaç kitap
okudum.
yesterday Hasan-GEN recommend -OBJP -3SG a few book

In (15a) the speaker thinks that the hearer shares the knowledge of a certain number of *books* that *Hasan* recommended. Thus, *birkaç kitap* is interpreted as specific. However, in (15b) the speaker thinks that the hearer does not share the knowledge of the number of the books. Thus, *birkaç kitap* is interpreted as non-specific.

Göksel and Kerslake (2005) state that apart from the use of the accusative case marker, the distinction between specific and non-specific indefinites is reflected in certain ways in Turkish. These sentences from Göksel and Kerslake (2005: 374-375) exemplify some specific interpretations.

- (16) a. Dün Korkut'a yeni gömlek-ler aldık.
yesterday Korkut-DAT new shirt-PL buy-PF-1PL
'Yesterday we bought (some) new shirts for Korkut.'
- b. Korkut'a yeni gömlek almamız lazım.
'We need to get a new shirt/(some) new shirts for Korkut.'
- c. [[Masaya] bırakılmış olan] bir not]-ta kaloriferler, çöplerin toplanması,
pencerelerin kilitlenmesi gibi konularda bilgiler vardı.
'In [a note [that had been left on the table]] there was information about
the central heating, rubbish collection, locking of windows, etc.'
- d. [[Masaya] bırakılmış] bir not] yeterli olurdu.
[A note [left on the table]] would have been enough.'

In sentence (16a) the use of the plural marking without a determiner refers to specific interpretation. However, in (16b) the clause expresses a future event. Thus, *the shirt* loses its *specificity*. In sentence (16c) the use of *olan* in the relative clauses, of which the verb is in the form *-miş olan* or *-(y)AcaAk olan*, is interpreted as specific. On the other hand in (16d) the omission of *olan* from the relative clause and the subject NP's being hypothetical make the reading non-specific.

2. 4. 3. Establishing Definiteness and Specificity in Turkish via Certain Discourse Strategies

Dede (1986) claims that the deictic terms and possessives, word order, modality and stress affect the status of the subject NP in Turkish. These sentences taken from Dede (1986:150-154) exemplify certain discourse strategies of expressing *definiteness* and *referentiality*.

- (17) a. Şu öğrenci sen-i bekli-yor.
that student you-ACC wait-PROG
'That student is waiting for you.'
- b. Arkadaş-m sen-i bekli-yor.
friend-2SG:POSS you-ACC wait-PROG
'Your friend is waiting for you.'
- c. Çocuk yer-de yat-ıyor-du.
child ground-LOC lie-PROG-PAST
'The child was lying on the ground.'
- d. Yer-de çocuk yat-ıyor-du.
ground-LOC child lie-PROG-PAST
'On the ground (a) child was lying.'
'On the ground children were lying.'
- e. Saat çal-ıyor.
clock strike-PROG
'The clock is striking.'
- f. Çocuk sev-il-mek iste-r.
child love-PASS-INF want-AOR
'Children need to be loved.'
- g. Çocuk sev-il-mek iste-di.
child love-PASS-INF want-PAST

‘The child needed to be loved.’

Sentences (17a) and (17b) exemplify deictic terms and possessives, respectively. According to Dede (1986), the subject NPs with possessives and deictic terms are interpreted as definite and referential. Thus, *öğrenci* and *arkadaş* gain definite and referential status when used with the deictic term *şu* and the second person singular possessive marker *-ın*, respectively. On the other hand, sentences (17c) and (17d) exemplify the effect of word order in terms of the *definiteness* and *referentiality*. In (17c) *çocuk* is in the initial position and functions as the topic. Dede (1986) claims that this reading is definite and referential. However, in (17d) the *definiteness* of *çocuk* is ambiguous; *çocuk* can be interpreted as a specific individual, or the sentence can refer to the *incident of children* or *a child lying on the ground*. Sentence (17e) exemplifies the role of the stress. When it is thought that sentence (17e) is the response of *Bu ses ne? Ne oluyor?* (*What is this sound? What is happening?*), the stress on the verb gives the NP a definite and referential interpretation. Finally, as Dede (1986) claims, modal operators such as future, possible, negative, conditional, question, habitual, generic, probability, etc. are effective in the interpretation of NPs in terms of *referentiality*. In sentence (18f), *çocuk* is interpreted as non-referential because of the use of modal contexts. However, *çocuk* in (18g) can be interpreted as referential.

2. 4. 4. Partitivity

Enç (1991) explains that if an NP introduces individuals from a previous set into the domain of discourse, it has partitive reading. The sentences below are taken from Enç (1991: 6) to illustrate the partitive interpretation.

- (18) a. Odam-a birkaç çocuk girdi.
 my-room-DAT several child entered
 ‘Several children entered my room.’
- b. İki kız-ı tanıyordum.
 two girl-ACC I-knew
 ‘I knew two girls.’
- c. İki kız tanıyordum.
 two girl I-knew
 ‘I knew two girls.’

If sentence (18a) is considered the first sentence uttered, the readings of the sentences in (18b) and (18c) differ from each other. When examined in detail, it is easily recognized that the NP in (18b) is marked with the accusative case, while the sentence in (18c) does not have a case marker. According to Enç (1991), sentence (18b) has partitive reading, as *iki kız* is from a set of children that has been mentioned in the previous discourse. However, the NP in the sentence (18c) is not interpreted as partitive, as *iki kız* are not considered to be the members of a previously mentioned set, and thus they are clearly excluded from the set.

Additionally, Enç (1991:10) states that there are two kinds of partitives in Turkish. The first is the NP, which yields the superset, marked with a genitive case marker. The second is the one marked with the ablative marker.

- (19) a. Ali kadın-lar-in iki-sin-i tanıyordu.
 Ali woman-PL-GEN two-AGR-ACC knew
 ‘Ali knew two of the women’
- b. Ali kadın-lar-dan iki-sin-i tanıyordu.
 Ali woman-PL-ABL two-AGR-ACC knew
 ‘Ali knew two of the women’

Enç (1991:10) states that, as illustrated in the sentences above, *partitivity* status is established via the use of the accusative case marker with the partitives in the object position. Given that the partitives are the NPs, which yield the superset, marked with the genitive and ablative case markers, the sentences (19a) and (19b) are interpreted as partitive.

2. 5. EARLIER STUDIES ON L2-ENGLISH ARTICLE SYSTEM

Studies concerning the L2-English article system are considered to have started with Bickerton’s (1981) taxonomy. Bickerton’s (1981) classification of English articles in terms of *definiteness* and *referentiality* has given way to studies concerning the acquisition of articles in L2-English of the speakers of other languages.

Based on Bickerton’s (1981) taxonomy, Huebner (1983) carried out a longitudinal study investigating how the article system in an adult’s interlanguage developed. Huebner’s

adult Laotian subject, who was reported to have acquired English in natural setting, was observed during 54-weeks and his narratives were recorded on a tape. As a result, Huebner (1983) found that in the subject's interlanguage *the* emerged first as an overgeneralization. Huebner called this overuse as "*the-flooding*". When compared to the acquisition of *the*, *a* was found to have acquired late. In Huebner's follow-up study, his Laotian subject appeared to be using *the* more frequently in [+SR, +HK] than in [-HK] contexts. *A* was found to be used less frequently when compared to the use of *the* and restricted to [-HK] contexts.

In 1987, Parrish conducted a study which aimed to find out if there was a systematicity in a learner's use of English articles. Parrish's subjects were 19-year-old Japanese classroom learners who had studied English as a foreign language for 6 years and then as a second language for four months. At the beginning of the study, the participants were reported to be at the beginner level. Parrish (1987) recorded the narratives of the participants for 16-weeks. Parrish (1987) found that the participants had acquired *zero article* first which was then followed by *the* and *a*, respectively. As the study went on, a gradual rise in the use of *the* and *a* was observed. When the uses of *the* and *a* were compared, the results showed that *the* was used correctly more frequently than *a*.

The aim of the study that Master (1987) conducted was to investigate the role of L1 in L2-English. Master (1987) studied 20 ESL learners who were at different proficiency levels and who were speakers of [-ART] languages (e.g. Japanese, Chinese, Russian) and [+ART] languages (e.g. German, Spanish). Master (1987) found that *zero article* was the first article to be acquired, especially for the speakers of [-ART] languages. The use of zero article decreased in all language groups as the proficiency level of English increased. Master (1987) reported that there was overuse of *the* in [-SR, +HK], but not in [-SR, -HK] contexts, apart from one participant. Master (1987) suggested that when *the* was used correctly, *a* occurred independently of which use was reported to be less frequent when compared to *zero article* and *the*.

Thomas (1989) studied the use of articles on the basis of *definiteness* and *referentiality*. Thomas's 30 ESL learners, who were at low, intermediate and high levels of proficiency and who were speakers of [+ART] and [-ART] languages, participated in a story-telling task. Thomas (1989) reported that the participants had not used *a* in the [-SR, -HK] contexts and *the* in the [+SR, +HK] accurately at the beginning of the study.

The sources of error were reported to be the overuse of *zero article* in all contexts. The participants of [-ART] languages had overused *zero article* more than the speakers of [+ART] languages. Thomas (1989) also reported the overuse of *the* in [+SR, -HK] contexts. However, he suggested that the overuse of *the* did not provide evidence for *the-flooding*.

Young (1996) studied the use of articles in L2-English of Czech and Slovak participants. Young (1996) found that the participants had used the indefinite article rarely, but when they did, they used it to mark [-HK] contexts. Young (1996) reported that the use of indefinites in [-HK] contexts increased when the proficiency level of English increased. Young (1996) concluded that the participants' use of indefinites in L2-English was target-like apart from the contexts in which they failed to provide indefinite articles.

2. 6. RECENT STUDIES ON L2-ENGLISH ARTICLE SYSTEM

Studies on the L2-acquisition of the English article system have increased in 2000s. In Robertson's (2000) study, it is apparent that the systemacy of the use of articles varied by advanced level Chinese ESL learners. Robertson (2000) found that the suppliance of articles was high (83% for *the* and 78% for *a*). It was reported that the sources of error was the omission of articles rather than misuse.

Leung's (2001) study yielded different results from the one conducted before. Leung found that participants, who were L1 Chinese speakers, used the indefinite article in both specific and non-specific indefinite contexts highly accurately. According to Leung's (2001) results, the participants provided *the* at a rate of 85% and *a* at a rate of 99.5% for the obligatory contexts. Leung's (2001) study also showed the overuse of indefinite articles in definite contexts.

Goto-Butler (2002) studied 80 Japanese students with varying levels of English proficiency. The task used was a fill-in-the-article test followed by an interview that was conducted to find the reasons for participants' article choice. Goto-Butler (2002) found that the source of the participants' errors was the misdetection of *referentiality* which was followed by misdetection of noun countability.

In their study Liu and Gleason (2002) studied participants' responses to four non-generic uses of *the*. Liu and Gleason (2002) defined these uses of *the* as 1) cultural (with a noun that is unique), 2) situational (when the referent of a first mention noun can be sensed directly or indirectly by the interlocutors, or the referent is known by the members in a local community), 3) structural (where *the* is used with the first mention noun that has a modifier), 4) textual (with a noun that has been previously referred to). According to the results of the study, each non-generic use of *the* posed a different level of difficulty. It was reported that the missing use of *the* for the obligatory contexts decreased as the participants' level of proficiency increased. However, the overuse of *the* for the obligatory contexts increased as the participants' English proficiency increased from low to intermediate but then decreased from intermediate to advanced.

Jarvis (2002) studied the role of discourse on participants' sensitivity to distinction between new and not-new NP referents. Jarvis (2002) asked 199 Finn and 145 Swedish participants to write a narrative description of what they had previously watched in a part of a film. The results of the study showed that the marking of NP referents depended on the L1s of the participants.

White (2003) reported that the source of errors in the interlanguage of an adult Turkish speaker, who was at advanced level of English, was the omission of indefinite articles. According to the results, the rate of suppliance of *the* and *a* was at a rate of 72% and 60%, respectively. The participant was not reported to have used definites in the place of indefinites.

In her research, Ekiert (2004) studied on the acquisition of the English article system by the speakers of Polish. Her group of participants included 10 adult Polish learners of ESL, 10 adult Polish learners of EFL and 5 native English speakers. The test instrument adopted was a written elicitation test included 42 sentences. The study yielded many results. One result supported the participants' early and accurate use of *a* in non-referential contexts. Secondly, it was reported that the participants commonly overused *zero article* but as the proficiency level increased, the overuse of *zero article* decreased. Thirdly, on the basis of the overuse of *the*, it was found that the intermediate level participants overused *the* more than the low- and high-proficiency participants. Ekiert (2007) conducted a case study in which an adult Polish speaker participated over a period of 15 months. The data collection methods were a limited context elicitation task,

an extended context elicitation task, free compositions and interviews. According to the results of Ekiert's (2007) study, the participant's accuracy on the different article uses increased during the data collection period. It was reported that the participant was more accurate at marking *indefiniteness* rather than *definiteness*. In terms of *indefiniteness*, the participant was reported to exhibit native-like performance.

In his study, Snape (2005) administered a fill-in-the-blank test to Japanese and Spanish learners of English. Snape (2005) investigated the overuse of *the* in indefinite specific contexts. According to the results of the study, the intermediate and advanced level Japanese participants overused *the* in indefinite specific contexts. Snape (2005) explained the phenomena with the lack of an article system in Japanese. On the other hand, Spanish speakers were found to exhibit better performance in the use of articles for the obligatory contexts. Snape (2005) claimed that there was likely to be L1 transfer from Spanish to English, as Spanish is known to have article system encoding *definiteness*.

Yılmaz (2006) investigated the role of L1 in the interlanguage of Turkish speakers. She administered picture description, writing and fill-in-the-article tasks to two groups of participants which included 20 beginner and 20 advanced level students. Yılmaz (2006) found that Turkish learners of English could make semantic distinctions among different contexts. The sources of error were reported to be the omission of the definite and the indefinite articles, and the overuse of *the* and *a/an* for the contexts which require a *zero article*. Yılmaz (2006) concluded that there was not clear evidence for persistent L1 effect in the use of the English article system.

Önen (2007) investigated the effect of context and task type on the use of English articles in the interlanguage of L1-Turkish speakers. Önen (2007) administered a multiple choice task and written production task. The participants of the study were 30 Turkish students who were at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels of English. According to the results of Önen's (2007) study, the accuracy of article use varied on the basis of NP contexts in multiple choice task while no significant difference was found in the written production test. The sources of error were reported to be the omission and substitution of the articles. Önen's (2007) study also revealed that the proficiency level of participants, the contexts of NPs and the task types were effective in the use of the English article system.

Bergeron-Matoba (2007) studied the role of L1 in the interlanguage of Japanese speakers. Bergeron-Matoba investigated how Japanese, a language which lacks an article system, affected the use of the English article system. The participants of the study were 8 Japanese speakers and one native English speaker. Bergeron-Matoba administered a forced-elicitation task, asking participants to fill in the blanks with one of the articles among *a*, *an*, *the* and *zero article*. The results of Bergeron-Matoba (2007) showed that Japanese speakers used *the* in specific definites and had *definiteness* and count/mass distinctions in their ILG, although these did not appear in the surface form. Humphrey (2007) administered a fill-in-the-blanks test to 50 second-year high school students and 52 non-English major university freshmen. According to Humphrey's (2007) results, the vowel of the following lexical item or the *-est* ending were effective in the participants' article choice. This kind of strategy was reported to be observed frequently in the participants of lower-proficiency levels.

In his study, Sarko (2008) investigated the role of L1 on 57 Syrian Arabic speakers of English. The task administered was an oral production task through which Sarko (2008) studied the effects of Arabic, which has a definite article but there is no phonological realization of indefinite article in spoken Arabic. According to the results of the study, all participants were better at providing definite articles, which supported the L1 effect. However, the lower-proficiency group used the indefinite article *a* or *zero article* for indefinite singular count nouns.

2.7. IONIN ET AL.'S ACCOUNT OF L2 ARTICLE CHOICE

Ionin et al. studied the acquisition of the English article system by speakers of other languages many times. Mainly they have argued that L2-English is UG-constrained, and therefore the *definiteness* and *referentiality* are accessible to L2-learners.

The first of these studies was conducted by Ionin and Wexler in 2002. In their study Ionin and Wexler (2002) discussed the distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* indefinites. Ionin and Wexler (2002:3) exemplify this distinction with the sentences below.

(20) a. I'd like to meet a famous writer- I really like her books.

- b. I'd like to meet a famous writer- any famous writer will do.

According to Ionin and Wexler (2002), the DP in sentence (20a) is *de re* indefinite which means it has a specific reference. However the DP in sentence (20b) is *de dicto*, indefinite; in other words, it does not have a specific reference.

In this study, Ionin and Wexler (2002) administered a translation task to 12 adult L1-Russian learners of English. The participants were asked to translate 56 Russian sentences into English. The second task, an elicitation task, was administered to 27 adult L1-Russian learners of English. In this task the participants were asked to read a dialogue in Russian and fill in the missing article in the last sentence of each dialogue, all of which were in English. The results of the translation task showed that L1-Russian learners of English associate *the* with *referentiality*. On the other hand, the results of the elicitation tasks showed that the L1-Russian learners of English overused *the* in referential indefinite contexts more than in non-referential indefinite contexts. The task also revealed that the overall proficiency had little effect on article use. In spite of the fact that the advanced level participants were more accurate in their article use, *the* overuse, as an error pattern, persisted in this group.

In their study Ionin et al. (2003) formulated a parameter governing article choice cross-linguistically. The Article Choice Parameter, adopted from Matthewson and Shaffer (2000), illustrates the languages with different markings of *definiteness* and *specificity*. The Article Choice Parameter, taken from Ionin et al. (2003: 248) classified the languages on the basis of semantic features.

The Article Choice Parameter

A language which has two articles can be distinguished as follows:

Setting I. Articles are distinguished on the basis of specificity.

Setting II. Articles are distinguished on the basis of definiteness.

Ionin et al. (2003) illustrate Setting I and Setting II with Samoan and English, respectively. Samoan is a language which marks *specificity* while English marks *definiteness*. The illustrations below are taken from Ionin et al. (2009) to show the difference between the two languages.

Table (1) Article grouping by *specificity* (Samoan)

	+ definite	- definite
+ specific	le	le
- specific	le	se

Table (2) Article grouping by *definiteness* (English)

	+ definite	- definite
+ specific	the	a
- specific	the	a

As illustrated above Table (1) Samoan encodes *specificity*. In Samoan, specific definites, non-specific definites and specific indefinites are marked with *le* while non-specific indefinites receive *se*. However, English, as a language encoding *definiteness*, marks specific definites and non-specific definites with *the*, while specific indefinites and non-specific indefinites receive *a* (Table 2).

What is claimed in the Article Choice Parameter (Ionin et al., 2003: 248) is that the L2-learners have access to both settings which are *definiteness* and *specificity*. However, the lack of the input causes L2-learners to fluctuate between the two settings. Ionin et al. (2003: 248) illustrates the patterns of fluctuation in the Table (3).

Table (3) Article use cross-linguistically: patterns for L2-English

<i>DP type</i>	Setting I	Setting II		L2-English fluctuation	
Non-specific indefinites	a	a		a	a
Specific indefinites	the	a		a	the
Definites	the	the		the	the

According to the Article Choice Parameter (Ionin et al., 2003:248), if L2-English learners adopt Setting I, they use *the* with definites and specific indefinites and *a* with non-specific indefinites. However, if they adopt Setting II, they use *the* with definites and *a* with all indefinites. Ionin et al. (2003:248) claim that under both settings, definites receive *the* and non-specific indefinites receive *a*. Therefore, the fluctuation is

expected in specific indefinites where L2-English learners use *the* and *a* interchangeably.

Having proposed their predictions in their study on the use of articles in L2-English, Ionin et al. (2003) conducted a study that included 50 L1-Russian and 38 L1-Korean learners of English. The first task administered to the participants was similar to the one adopted in Ionin and Wexler (2002). This task included 56 short dialogues in the learners' L1 and the target sentences in English which lacked articles. The participants were asked to read the dialogues and fill in the blanks with a word among *a*, *the*, *zero article* (for singulars) and *some*, *the* and *zero article* (for plurals). The second task was the Michigan test of L2 proficiency which was administered to classify the participants into proficiency levels. According to the results of the study, the intermediate and advanced L2-English learners used *the* with definites and *a/some/zero article* with non-specific indefinites. However, they used *the* and *a* interchangeably in specific indefinites. The results supported the hypothesis which predicted that L2-English learners fluctuate between the two settings of the Article Choice Parameter.

In 2006 Ko et al. investigated the *partitivity* as a semantic feature in L2-English. They administered a forced-choice elicitation test to 20 adult L1-Korean learners of English. The task included 80 dialogues in English, all of which targeted sentences consisted of a blank which was asked to fill in with an article. The results of the study showed that adult L2-English learners overused *the* instead of *a* in partitive sentences. Ko et al. (2006:181) concluded that the L2-learners' errors reflected a systematic access to semantic universals, which are *definiteness*, *specificity*, *partitivity*, available in Universal Grammar.

Ionin et al. (2008) investigated the sources of linguistic knowledge in second language acquisition of English articles. Ionin et al. (2008: 554) studied the role of three factors: the L2-input, the structures of L2-English learners' native language and the innate linguistic knowledge. The participants were 23 adult speakers of Russian and 24 adult speakers of Spanish. Before administering the task, a cloze test was administered to classify the participants into different proficiency levels. The instrument adopted was an elicitation test consisting of 60 dialogues in English. The participants were asked to fill in the blanks in the target sentence with an appropriate word. The results of the elicitation test revealed that the speakers of the [+ART] language, which was Spanish in

this study, were able to transfer the article semantics from their L1 to their L2. However, as Russian is a [-ART] language, the Russian speakers were not able to transfer articles from their L1 to their L2. According to Ionin et al. (2008: 574), the Russian participants made use of a combination of UG-access and input processing. In other words, UG told them the possible patterns of article choice which were *definiteness* and *specificity* in a natural language. The L2-English learners fluctuated between the two patterns until their input told them the appropriate pattern for English.

Ko et al. (2008) studied the effect of L1 on L2-English article system and *partitivity*, as a semantic feature. Thirty adult L1-Serbo-Croatian speakers and 20 adult L1-Korean speakers participated in the study. The L1s of the participants were typologically different but both of them were [-ART] languages. The participants were given the Michigan test to measure their proficiency levels. The test instrument applied to the participants was a forced-choice elicitation test including 20 dialogues of which targeted sentences had blanks to fill in with one of the choices: *the*, *a* and *zero article*. The results of the study revealed that the participants overused *the* with indefinites when the context was [+partitive] or [+specific]. Secondly, the maximal overuse of *the* was observed in [+partitive, +specific] contexts. The puzzling findings were that *specificity* is accessible for Korean speakers while it was weak or non-existent for Serbo-Croatian speakers. Considering the fact that both of the languages lack article system, Ko et al. (2008) concluded that the difference stemmed from the overall L2-proficiency between two groups. It was stated that all Serbo-Croatian participants were advanced level learners of English, while among the 20 Korean speakers, only 16 participants were advanced and the rest were intermediate level learners of English.

In 2009, Ionin et al. investigated the article use in the L2-English of adult and child speakers of Russian on the basis of the strategies used in the article choice. The participants of the study were 15 children L1-Russian speakers and 21 adult L1-Russian speakers. All of the participants took a written elicitation test on article use, and only the adult participants took a test on L2-proficiency before the written elicitation task. The elicitation test, which was modeled after Ionin et al. (2003; 2004), included 60 short dialogues of which target sentences had a blank. The participants were asked to fill in the blanks with the appropriate word. The results of the study revealed that both the adult and child speakers of Russian were sensitive to *definiteness* and *specificity*.

However article use of children was more consistent with natural language. Ionin et al. (2009) proposed that this stemmed from the adult participants' use of the explicit strategies which led the overuse of *the* with indefinites and the overuse of *a* with definites.

2. 8. SUMMARY

The literature review of the study consists of several parts. Firstly, the definitions of semantic features, which are *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity*, are given. Secondly, the classification of English article system is explained through *referentiality* and *definiteness*. Thirdly, the encoding of semantic features in Turkish is presented. The fourth part includes the literature review on the acquisition of the article system. This section consists of a survey of earlier and recent studies concerning the article choice of the speakers of other languages. In the final part of the study, a review of the studies, which have been carried out by Ionin et al., is presented.

3. METHODOLOGY

3. 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a thorough description of the participants and setting as well as the data collection instruments of the present study. Detailed information about the material used in this study, the preparation and the revision of the material, the description of the research protocol, and the measurements and calculations performed in the data analysis can be found in this chapter.

As mentioned before the aim of the current study is to examine the English article choice of L1-Turkish speakers of L2-English. It studies how *definiteness*, *specificity* and *partitivity*, as semantic features affect the L1-Turkish speakers' choice of article in their L2-English. The article choice of L1-Turkish speakers' was investigated by means of a written elicitation test the results of which were analyzed in terms of the participants' overuse and accuracy of article use. These choices of uses were studied in four types of test sentences, each of which are [+definite, -partitive, +specific], [+definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, -partitive, +specific], [-definite, -partitive, -specific]. The other two types of contexts that are [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and [-definite, +partitive, -specific], mainly investigated the effect of previously proposed semantic universal which is referred to as 'partitivity' (Enç 1991). The data for the study were collected at an English-medium university, and elicited from low-proficiency and high-proficiency level students of L2-English.

The results of the present study may seriously contribute to the research on the article acquisition of the English article system by L2-English learners. The studies conducted to examine the article choices of learners with typologically different L1s such as article-less languages and languages encoding semantic notions in their article systems, provided valuable data for the research in future. When the *partitivity* effect on the interlanguage of L1-Turkish learners of L2-English is taken into consideration, the findings of the test investigating the *partitivity* effect may also contribute to the current study by examining the universality of this semantic feature. In other words, the current

study is seeking to find out if cross-linguistic variation interacts with the *partitivity* effect.

3. 1. 2. Setting and Participants

The current study was conducted with two groups of participants representing two different levels of L2 English proficiency: low-proficiency and high-proficiency level learners of L2 English. The test was administered at Middle East Technical University (METU), an English-medium university in Ankara, Turkey. The reason why an English-medium university was chosen is because it was hoped that the length and quality of high-proficiency level students' exposure to English would provide more reliable data. Demographic data about the participants of this study are given below.

Table (4) Participation by age and gender

		Low-proficiency Group	High-proficiency Group	Total
Age	Mean	18.63	22.26	20.45
	Range	17-21	20-26	17-26
Sex		15 females	18 females	33 females
		15 males	12 males	27 males

As mentioned before, this study was carried out on two proficiency groups, each of which included 30 participants. As shown in Table (4), the mean age of all participants was 20.45 and the range was 17-26. When analyzed separately in terms of groups, the data about the age and sex of the participants are as follows: the mean age of the low-proficiency group was 18.63 and the age range of this group was 17-21. The mean age of the high-proficiency level group was 22.26 ranging between 20 and 26. The number of females and males who participated in the study was 33 and 27, respectively and 60 in total. There were 15 females and 15 males in the low-proficiency group while there were 18 females and 12 males in the high-proficiency group.

The first group of participants included 30 low-proficiency L2 English learners. As METU is a university where a large number of international students enroll, the tests completed by foreign students from various backgrounds such as Chinese, Kazak, etc. were discarded and only the participants whose native language was Turkish were taken

into consideration -in total 30 participants. The participants in the low-proficiency group took the METU Proficiency Exam in September 2009 and were placed in the lowest proficiency group in the Department of Basic English based on their exam scores. It is defined in the Department of English's course catalogue (2009) that the DBE (Department of Basic English) 101 Beginner's Level course includes students who scored around 20-25 out of 100 on the METU proficiency exam. DBE 101, a 270-hour beginner course, aims to provide students with basic language and vocabulary through reading, listening, writing and speaking for academic purposes.

The second group of participants consisted of 30 high-proficiency level students. The test was administered to 36 high-proficiency level participants, 6 of whom had to be discarded because the tests were half-completed or performed by foreign students. The participants in the high-proficiency group were chosen randomly among students taking the ENG 311 Advanced Communication Skills course. As it is defined in the course catalogue of Department of English (2009), ENG 311 is a skill-based course focusing on the use of English in a variety of post-graduate environments. It is a 42-hour course, and the pre-requisites for the course include ENG 101, 121 and 211. This means that a student taking ENG 311 is required to have at least an upper-intermediate or advanced level of English proficiency.

The linguistic ability in other foreign languages apart from English were also analyzed and it was found that only 3 participants in the low-proficiency group rated themselves at the beginner level in other foreign languages. On the other hand, in the high-proficiency group 9 participants rated themselves at the beginner level and 4 participants rated themselves at the intermediate level. The high-proficiency group included 3 participants who could speak a second language other than English while none of the subjects in the low-proficiency group could speak a second foreign language except for English. (See APPENDIX A)

3. 1. 3. Instrument

The data collection method adopted in this study was a short-answer test (See APPENDIX B). Popham (1999) states that the short-answer test type asks participants to supply a certain word, phrase or a sentence in response to an incomplete statement.

The reason that a short-answer test was adopted is its suitability to assess the target articles in this study. Another reason for choosing a short-answer test is for the purpose of comparability with previous studies such as Ionin et al. (2009), Yılmaz (2006), Önen (2007). According to Holt and Kysilka (2006), short-answer items are appropriate for assessing learner's higher-order thinking ability. They assert that there are several advantages of using a short-answer test to assess a learner's knowledge. The major advantage of short-answer items is that they prevent learners from recognizing the answer from selected-response items (Holt and Kysilka, 2006). According to Van Blerkom (2009:71), short-answer items assess "a deeper level of learning" which requires recalling the knowledge at a deeper level of the memory. Van Blerkom (2009) adds that another important advantage of short-answer items is that they prevent learners from answering correctly by merely guessing, which decreases the reliability of the test.

The short-answer test used in the current study was a written elicitation task on English article use in which participants were expected to fill in the blanks left at various positions in a given dialogue. The original version of this test was used in Ionin et al. (2009) and permission to administer this new version was obtained from the authors of the study. Test items of the material were short dialogues with blanks targeting to elicit articles. Some of the dialogues provided information about the setting of the conversation. The students were asked to fill in the blanks with a word or a dash (-) where they felt was appropriate for each environment. Ionin et al.'s (2009) test was redesigned according to the aims of the current study. The number of test items was decreased from 60 in the original test to 40 in the present test. The reason for this decrease was to avoid fatigue and lack of concentration, which could result in poor and non-representative performance. The test included 30 critical items, which represent the 6 different semantic contexts and each semantic context is embodied in 5 test items. In addition, 10 filler items were used in the test which, target a range of words such as pronouns, auxiliaries.

The contexts according to which test items were designed were named after 6 types. The first type of test item defines the [+definite, -partitive, +specific] environment which targets *the* as exemplified in (1) (modeled after test items from Ionin et al., 2009). The salient referent in this sentence is presupposed by the speaker/writer and the

listener/reader; both the speaker/writer and the listener/reader presuppose the existence of a unique *owner*. However, as the referent *owner* does not belong to a set previously mentioned, the referent is not partitive. *Specificity* is established as the speaker/writer and the listener/reader refer to a particular *owner*.

(1) *At a bookstore*

Chris: Well, I've bought everything that I wanted. Are you ready to go?

Mike: Almost. Can you please wait a few minutes? I want to talk to _____ owner of this bookstore – she is a very nice lady, and I always say hi to her.

The second type of sentences which is exemplified in (2) is [+definite, -partitive, -specific] and the target article is *the* regardless of whether the context is [+specific] or [-specific] which shows that uniqueness presupposition is in the speaker/writer's mind and is not shared by the listener/reader. The speaker/writer and the listener/reader presuppose the existence of a unique *author*. However, *author* is not a member of a previously mentioned set. The speaker/writer and the listener/reader do not refer to a particular author. Thus *author* is neither partitive nor specific in this sentence.

(2) **Mother:** What are you reading in the newspaper?

Daughter: I'm reading a poem about baby lions – I really like it. I would like to write a letter to _____ author of that poem – unfortunately, I have no idea who it is... The poem isn't signed!

The third type of test items defines [-definite, -partitive, +specific] context as given in (3). The participants were expected to fill in the blanks with *a/an* as the sentences are not definite. As is well known, there is not a salient referent shared by the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. The speaker/writer and the listener/reader do not presuppose the existence of a unique *story*. The referent of the sentence is not a member of a previously mentioned set. However, the speaker/writer and the listener/reader refer to a particular *story*.

(3) **Father:** How did little Billy spent the evening yesterday, when I wasn't here?

Mother: He did all his homework! And he read _____ very interesting story: it's about a small fishing village in Portugal, and the lives of the people who live there. He told me all about it.

The fourth type of sentences (4) is referring to the [-definite, -partitive, -specific] context aims at *a/an* article. This category defines the situation in which neither the speaker/writer nor the listener/reader has a shared salient referent. The speaker/writer and the listener/reader do not presuppose the existence of a unique *girl*. The referent of the sentence, which is *girl*, is not a member of a previously mentioned set. Additionally, the speaker/writer does not have a particular *girl* in mind.

(4) ***Mother comes home***

Mother: How did Peter spend the day at his grandmother's?

Father: He had a good time. He did his homework for tomorrow. Then he went outside and played with _____ little girl – I don't know who it was.

The fifth category of sentences [-definite, +partitive, +specific] tests the *partitivity* effect in the L2-English of L1-Turkish speakers. The speaker/writer and the listener/reader do not presuppose the existence of a unique *child*. This context refers to a target referent, which is *child*, that belongs to a set and as it has been previously mentioned as a set. Additionally, the speaker/writer has a particular *child* in mind. Thus, participants were required to supply *a/an* to the blanks as exemplified in (5).

(5) **Marian:** Guess what! I just started working on the school newspaper. I take photographs!

Jim: So what photographs have you taken so far?

Marian: Well, I went to a park. At first I took photographs of flowers and trees. But I wanted to practice on people, too! There were lots of people in the park – adults and children. I photographed _____ child. She was Mrs. Dowson's daughter Alice.

The sixth type of sentences, testing *partitivity*, is [-definite, + partitive, -specific]. The speaker/writer and the listener/reader do not presuppose the existence of a unique *pen*. However, this context defines the referent of the target sentence, which is *pen*, belonging to a previously mentioned set and participants were expected to provide *a/an* to the blanks (6). The speaker/writer has a particular *child* in mind, also. The difference between the sentences in (5) and (6) is the speaker/writer's reference to a salient referent. In (5) the speaker/writer has the referent in mind while in (6) the speaker/writer has no specific knowledge of the referent.

(6) **Mother:** What did you and Kenny do yesterday, when I wasn't here?
Father: Well, we went shopping. Kenny needed something to write with. We went to a store that had lots of pencils, pens, and markers. I told Kenny he could buy just one thing. So he bought _____ pen. I have no idea which one.

The previous version of the test used by Ionin et al. (2009) consisted of 20 fillers while the remodeled version of this study included 10, one of which is exemplified in (7).

(7) **Buying groceries**
Salesclerk: Welcome to our store. May I help you?
Customer: Where is the dairy section? I would like to buy my daughter some cheese. _____ is hungry.

The test booklet also included a personal details page including questions to elicit personal details from participants for the statistical analysis such as name, surname, sex, date of birth and department of the participants. Participants were also asked about the language(s) they spoke apart from Turkish and their proficiency level in that language. This question helped to discard the tests of the participants with different language backgrounds as the current research does not aim to study the role of other languages.

3. 1. 4. Procedure

First, in order to administer the test at Middle East Technical University, an application was sent to the Applied Ethics Research Center. The Department of Basic English Modern and Modern Languages were informed about the permission sought to apply the test.

Participants took part in the study on a voluntary basis; none of them was paid or received academic credit for participating. At the beginning of the procedure, the students were told that they would have a kind of fill-in-the-blanks task testing certain structures in English and the data they provided would be used in a research study. After the participants were asked to complete the personal details at the very beginning of the test, the researcher read the instructions loudly to the class and asked if there was anything unclear. As it can be clearly understood from the instructions section of the test, the participants were asked to fill in the blanks with the most appropriate word that they thought was grammatically correct. To make it more clear, a group of random

words, including two target articles and a dash (-), were given in the instructions section. Additionally, when asked, especially in the low-proficiency group, the researcher provided explanations in Turkish. The practice items below the instructions completed by the participants together with the help of the researcher. The aim of this kind of support is to prevent misunderstandings and ensure that the participants have understood what their task is. None of the participants was allowed to use a dictionary. Time allotted to the participants was approximately 25 minutes. The test was administered in a classroom setting in the presence of their instructor and the researcher.

3. 1. 5. Data Analysis

The material used in the current study was a kind of written-elicitation-test, which was a fill-in-the-blanks test. In this test, participants were asked to fill in the blanks with the words that they felt appropriate and grammatical. They were asked to put a dash (-) in the blank, if they felt sentences did not need any change. The data analysis process was started by removing 7 incomplete tests from the data set which included 82 tests. As the current study aims to investigate article uses of L1 Turkish speakers of L2 English, tests performed by the students with a L1 background other than Turkish were also removed from the data set, leaving 60 tests available for further analysis.

The coding process was done by marking sentence types and fillers in the test. The environments which were exemplified in the test with 5 sentences were defined to their target articles as in Table (5). After the identification process was performed, fillers of the test were omitted leaving only the test items.

Table (5) Sentence Types with context defined and target articles

Sentence Type	Context	Target Article
1	[+definite, - partitive, +specific]	<i>the</i>
2	[+definite, - partitive, -specific]	<i>the</i>
3	[-definite, - partitive, +specific]	<i>a/an</i>
4	[-definite, - partitive, -specific]	<i>a/an</i>
5	[-definite, + partitive, +specific]	<i>a/an</i>
6	[-definite, + partitive, -specific]	<i>a/an</i>

The statistical analysis of the test was made by using SPSS 11.5 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The variables of the test were coded as sex, age, proficiency level of English, department, foreign language and proficiency level in this language. Answers elicited from subjects were coded in four value labels that were 1.00 = “the”, 2.00 = “a/an”, 3.00 = “dash” and 9.00 = “other”. As mentioned before, dash (-) was one of the things that subjects were asked to provide in blanks. Subjects were asked to write a dash when they thought the sentence did not need any change. The reason of this use is to discriminate the answers that have been evaluated and judged in which no change is needed from the ones that have not been answered by the subjects. The label 9.00 was provided for all the answers except for *the*, *a/an* or *dash*. This label included pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, etc. that were written by subjects for test items.

The data entry process was followed by reliability and validity measurements of the test items. Secondly, measurements of frequency and accuracy rate of the sentence types were performed. The third part of the analysis included the comparison of the article uses of test groups who were low- and high-proficiency level students. Mann-Whitney test and t-test were applied to the data to find the differences in sentence types targeting certain uses of articles.

3. 2. SUMMARY

This chapter includes methodological information of the study conducted. In the first section of the chapter demographic data about the participants and the setting of the test applied are explained. The second section includes information about the test instrument used in this study. The third part of the study explains the procedure that was followed. The final part of this chapter includes the procedure of data codification and the analysis of the data. The results of the test applied is found in the results section of the next chapter.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4. 1. RESULTS

4. 1. 1. Introduction

This study investigates article use in the interlanguage of L1-Turkish learners of L2-English. To test the article choice of L1-Turkish learners of L2-English, a 40-item written elicitation task was used, which included fillers and sentences representing the 6 different semantic contexts: [+definite, -partitive, +specific], [+definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, -partitive, +specific], [-definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and [-definite, +partitive, -specific]. The participants of the test were L1-Turkish learners of L2-English who were studying at METU in Ankara, Turkey. The data was codified taking into consideration the fact that each item in the test should be answered with one of the following responses: *the*, *a/an*, *dash* or *other*. This section of the study includes the results of the test administered, the tables used to illustrate the findings, and comparisons concerning the aim of the current study. Reliability and validity measurements of the test items, frequency and accuracy rate of the sentence types and comparison of the article uses of test groups are also explained in detail in this section.

4. 1. 2. Results According to Sentences of Type [-Partitivity]

The figures in this part of the study report the frequency distribution of the articles supplied by the participants. The figures show the rates of potential answers, which are *the*, *a/an*, *zero article*, *other* and *missing slots*, provided to the four different types of contexts. The reliability coefficient of the test, Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), came out to be 0.85, which means the test can be considered reliable. Validity studies of sentence types were performed and it was found that a test item denoting [-definite, +partitive, +specific] environment may need a change in further studies (0.26).

Table (6) Written elicitation task results

		Articles Supplied				
Context	Target Article	The	A /An	Zero Article	Other	Missing Slots
Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific]	The	219/300 73.0%	11/300 3.66%	21/300 7.0%	24/300 8.0%	25/300 8.33%
Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific]	The	210/300 70.0%	16/300 5.33%	21/300 7.0%	22/300 7.33%	31/300 10.33%
Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific]	A/An	30/300 10.0%	208/300 69.33%	10/300 3.33%	22/300 7.33%	30/300 10.0%
Type 4 [-definite, - partitive,-specific]	A/An	29/300 9.66%	224/300 74.66%	7/300 2.33%	17/300 5.66%	23/300 7.66%

As Table (6) shows, Type 1, which defines the [+definite, -partitive, +specific] context and targets a *the* response, was provided with the correct answer at a rate of 73% (219 uses out of 300 contexts). The participants substituted *a/an* for the sentences that require *the* at a rate of 3.66% (11 uses out of 300). The participants provided *zero article* at a rate of 7.0% (21 uses out of 300). The participants' answers were coded as "other" at a rate of 8.0% (24 uses out of 300) which included words other than articles. Missing slots were counted as 25 out of 300 (8.33%) of Type 1 sentences. From these numbers it can be said that the participants of this study overwhelmingly made use of *the* in Type 1 sentences defining [+definite, -partitive, +specific] environments. The test item below exemplifies the word incorrectly provided for a Type 1 sentence.

(1) **Dominique:** I heard that your sister went on vacation. Where did she go?
Raquel: Europe. She spent two weeks in **big** capital of France: Paris. It's a beautiful city, and she really enjoyed her trip.

Participants' use of the article *the* for Type 2 sentences, which define [+definite, -partitive, -specific] contexts, amounted to 70% (210 uses out of 300 contexts). The participants used the article *a/an* at a rate of 5.33% (16 uses out of 300 uses) and *zero article* at a rate of 7% (21 uses out of 300 uses). The participants produced answers which were coded as "other" at a rate of 7.33% (22 uses out of 300 contexts) and left sentences unanswered at a rate of 10.33% (31 slots out of 300 contexts). The figures show that participants of this study used *the* more target-like than other words in Type 2 sentences, which define [+definite, -partitive, -specific] context. The test item below exemplifies the word incorrectly provided for Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] context.

(2) *At a toy store*

Sales clerk: May I help you?

Client: Yes! I am very angry. I bought a toy for my child at this store, but it's broken! I want to talk to *responsible* owner of this store – I don't care who that is! I am going to complain!

Type 3 sentences which define the [-definite, -partitive, +specific] context require *a/a*. The participants of the study provided *the* at a rate of 10.0% (30 uses out of 300) and *a/an* at a rate of 69.33% (208 uses out of 300). The words -apart from the articles- provided by the participants constituted 7.33% (22 uses out of 300) of the responses. The rate of missing slots in the test was 10.0% (30 uses out of 300). Apparently, the participants' *a/an* use demonstrated a sharper distinction when compared to their use of *the* and *zero article*. The test item below exemplifies the article incorrectly provided for a Type 3 sentence.

(3) *Grandfather comes for a visit*

Grandfather: Where is my little granddaughter Beth? Is she home?

Father: No. She is not going to be back till late. She is having dinner with *the* girl from class – her name is Angie, and Beth really likes her.

Type 4 sentences which encompass the [-definite, -partitive, -specific] environment and require *a/an*, were responded to using *the* at a rate of 9.66% (29 uses out of 300). However, the participants of the study supplied *a/an* at a higher percentage (74.66% and 224/300) than other articles. The rate of answers coded as "other" was 5.66% (17 uses

out of 300). The participants provided no answers to 7.66% of the sentences (23 uses out of 300). The test item below exemplifies the article incorrectly provided for Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific] context.

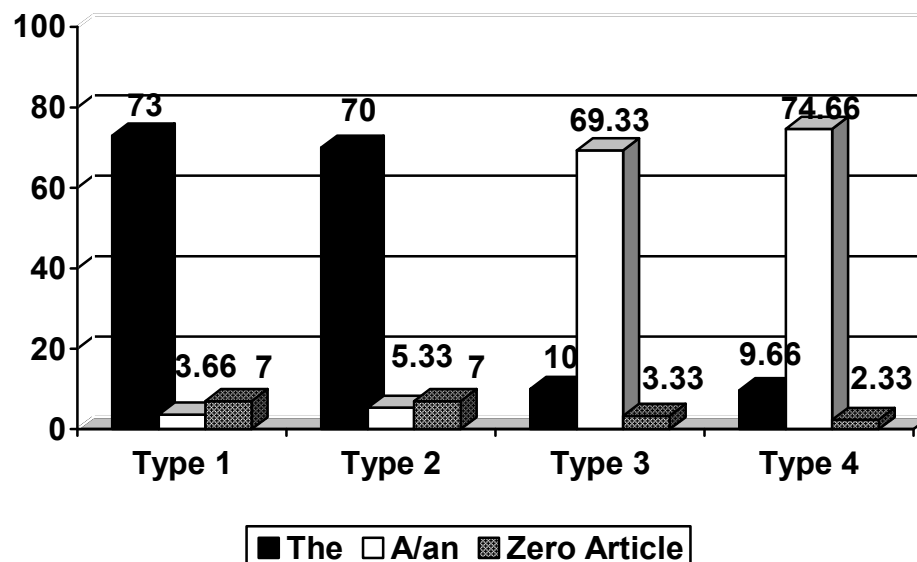
(4) *In a school*

Child: It's my birthday next week!

Teacher: That's great. Are you going to have a party?

Child: Yes! A big party! I am hoping to get *the* new dog! I love animals!

Figure (2) Percentages of *the*, *a/an* and *zero article* in [-partitive] contexts



In general, participants of this study used target words for the sentences of [+definite, -partitive, +specific], [+definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and [-definite, -partitive, -specific], contexts. The highest accuracy rate was found for Type 4 sentences with [-definite, -partitive, -specific] context (224/300; 74.66%). The lowest accuracy rate in providing the target article in obligatory contexts was found in Type 3 sentences with [-definite, -partitive, +specific] context (208/300; 69.33%). The total use of article *the* in [+definite, -partitive, +specific], [+definite, -partitive, -specific] contexts was counted as 429 over 600 sentences (at a rate of 71.50%), while the total use of *a/an* was found in 432 out of 600 sentences. It was found that the substitution rates of certain articles varied according to sentence types. To exemplify, participants substituted the article *the* for Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] (30/300; 10.0%) and Type 4 [-

definite, - partitive, -specific] contexts (29/300; 9.66%) more than *zero article* and other words. On the other hand, it was found that the participants of the study substituted article *a/an* less than *zero article* (21/300, 7.0%; 21/300, 7.0%) and other words (24/300, 8.0%; 22/300, 7.33%) in Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences, respectively.

4. 1. 2. 1. Results According to Sentences of Type [-Partitivity] and Proficiency Levels

This part mainly focuses on the data provided for each context types by the participants of the study. As mentioned before, four context types requiring certain article uses were categorized according to the answers given by the subjects that were low-proficiency and high-proficiency groups (See APPENDIX C).

4. 1. 2. 1. 1. Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] Sentences and Proficiency Levels

Table (7) shows how low- and high-proficiency level students performed in Type 1 sentences denoting [+definite, - partitive, +specific] context.

Table (7) Article Choice in Type 1 sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific]		Articles Supplied				
Level	Target Article	The	A /An	Zero Article	Other	Missing Slots
Low-Proficiency Group	The	82/150 54.66%	9/150 6.0%	15/150 10.0%	20/150 13.33%	24/150 16.0%
High-Proficiency Group		137/150 91.33%	2/150 1.33%	6/150 4.0%	4/150 2.66%	1/150 0.66%

As seen in Table (7), in Type 1 sentences -containing the test items requiring *the*- the high-proficiency group's performance (137/150; 91.33%) is clearly better than the

performance of the low-proficiency group (82/150; 54.66%). The Mann-Whitney Tests also showed that there was a difference between low-proficiency and high-proficiency level participants in terms of providing the correct answers ($t = -6.8$, $p < .05$). Both of the groups supplied *the* correctly at the highest rate when compared to *a/an* and *zero article*. Apart from the missing slots, the second most supplied ones are other words that differed across groups. The low-proficiency group provided words other than articles at a rate of 13.33% (20/150) while it was *zero article* for the high-proficiency group at a rate of 4.0% (6/150). It was also observed that the low-proficiency group substituted *a/an* for the contexts requiring *the* at a rate of 6.0% (9/150) and *zero article* at a rate of 10.0% (15/150). These rates were lower for the high-proficiency group, who substituted *a/an* at a rate of 1.33% (2/150) and *zero article* for 4.0% (6/150). The examples below show the word and article incorrectly provided for Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] context requiring *the*.

(5) a. *At the end of a running race*

Laura: Are you ready to leave?

Betsy: No, not yet. First, I need to talk to *good* winner of this race – he is my good friend, and I want to congratulate him!

b. **Eric:** I really liked that book you gave me for my birthday. It was very interesting!

Laura: Thanks! I like it too. I would like to meet \emptyset author of that book some day – I saw an interview with her on TV, and I really liked her.

4. 1. 2. 1. 2. Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] Sentences and Proficiency Levels

Table (8) shows the performance of low- and high-proficiency level students in Type 2 sentences denoting [+definite, -partitive, -specific] context.

Table (8) Article Choice in Type 2 sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific]		Articles Supplied				
Level	Target Article	The	A /An	Zero Article	Other	Missing Slots
Low-Proficiency Group	The	84/150 56.0%	10/150 6.66%	10/150 6.66%	17/150 11.33%	29/150 19.33%
High-Proficiency Group		126/150 84.0%	6/150 4.0%	11/150 7.33%	5/150 3.33%	2/150 1.33%

Type 2 sentences that define the [+definite, -partitive, -specific] context require *the*. The performance of the higher-proficiency group (126/150; 84.0%) was better than the performance of the low-proficiency group (84/150; 56.0%) in providing the correct article for the Type 2 sentences which require *the*. The Mann-Whitney results confirmed that there was a significant difference between the two groups ($t = -4.6$, $p < .05$). It can be said that both of the groups provided *the* correctly with the highest rate when compared to other possibilities. For the low-proficiency group –apart from the missing slots- the second most provided words were *other* responses (17/150; 11.33%) while for the high-proficiency group, the *zero article* was the second most provided article (11/150; 7.33%). The low-proficiency participants substituted *a/an* at a rate of 6.66% (10/150) and *zero article* at 6.66% (10/150) while the substitution rate for *a/an* was 4.0% (6/150) and *zero article* was 7.33% (11/150) for the high-proficiency group. There are two test items given below exemplifying how the participants substituted words and articles incorrectly for the contexts requiring *the*.

(6) a. **Marcus:** Can you and your friend Rick come over this week-end?

Jim: I'll come over, but Rick isn't here. He went to **their** house of his uncle. I have no idea where that is. But Rick was very excited about going!

b. **Ruby:** It's already 4pm. Why isn't your little brother home from school?

Angela: He just called and told me that he got in trouble! He is talking to **Ø** principal of his school! I don't know who that is. I hope my brother comes home soon.

4. 1. 2. 1. 3. Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] Sentences and Proficiency Levels

Table (9) shows how low- and high-proficiency level students performed in Type 3 sentences denoting [-definite, -partitive, +specific] context.

Table (9) Article Choice in Type 3 sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific]		Articles Supplied				
Level	Target Article	The	A /An	Zero Article	Other	Missing Slots
Low-Proficiency Group	A/An	15/150 10.0%	83/150 55.33%	7/150 4.66%	16/150 10.66%	29/150 19.33%
High-Proficiency Group		15/150 10.0%	125/150 83.33%	3/150 2.0%	6/150 4.0%	1/150 0.66%

Type 3 sentences defining the [-definite, -partitive, +specific] context require *a/an*. As it can be clearly seen in Table (9) the high-proficiency group performed better at providing *a/an* for Type 3 contexts (125/150; 83.33%) than the low-proficiency group (83/150; 55.33%). The results of the Mann-Whitney test showed that the two groups differed significantly from each other ($t = -4.6$, $p < .05$). Overall, both of the groups provided *a/an* at the highest rate. Apart from missing slots, the words other than the articles were the second most provided ones for the low-proficiency group (16/150; 10.66%) and *the* was the second most provided one for the high-proficiency group (15/150; 10.0%). With respect to substitution errors, the low-proficiency group tended to supply *the* at a rate of 10.0% (15/150) and *zero article* at a rate of 4.66% (7/150) instead of *a/an*. Two test items are given below showing the incorrect answers of the participants for the contexts requiring *a/an*.

(7) a. *Grandfather comes for a visit***Grandfather:** Where is my little granddaughter Beth? Is she home?**Father:** No. She is not going to be back till late. She is having dinner with **the** girl from class – her name is Angie, and Beth really likes her.b. *Father comes home***Father:** Thank you for taking care of Karen. How did you spend the day?**Baby-sitter:** Well, we went to a park. Karen played in the sandbox for a while. And then she met **her** beautiful friendly dog – he was very well-behaved, and Karen played with him for almost an hour.

4. 1. 2. 1. 4 Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific] Sentences and Proficiency Levels

Table (10) shows the performance of low- and high-proficiency level students in Type 4 sentences denoting [-definite, -partitive, -specific] context.

Table (10) Article Choice in Type 4 sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific]		Articles Supplied				
Level	Target Article	The	A /An	Zero Article	Other	Missing Slots
Low-Proficiency Group	A/An	14/150 9.33%	95/150 63.33%	5/150 3.33%	13/150 8.66%	23/150 15.33%
High-Proficiency Group		15/150 10.0%	129/150 86.0%	2/150 1.33%	4/150 2.66%	0 0

Type 4 sentences require the *a/an* article defining the context [-definite, -partitive, -specific]. As shown in Table (10), the high-proficiency group (129/150; 86.0%) was better than the low-proficiency group (95/150; 63.33%) at providing *a/an*. The results of the Mann-Whitney test confirmed that there was a significant difference between the two groups ($t = -4.2, p < .05$). In both of the groups, *a/an* article had the highest rate when compared to other answers. Apart from the missing slots, *the* was the answer that was the second mostly provided in the low-proficiency group (14/150; 9.33%) and the high-proficiency group (15/150; 10.0%) of participants' results. In terms of substitution errors, the low-proficiency group substituted *the* at a rate of 9.33% (14/150) and *zero article* at a rate of 33% (5/150), while the high-proficiency group substituted *the* at a

rate of 10.0% (15/150) and *zero article* at a rate of 1.33% (2/150). Two items from the test are given below showing words and articles for the contexts which require *a/an*.

(8) a. **Jessie:** I had my first babysitting job yesterday.

Lesley: How was it?

Jessie: Fine. It was a little boy named “Niles”. I played a monopoly game with him. Then I did my homework, and Niles read **the** short story – I don’t know what it was about. And then I put him to bed.

b. *After school*

Father: Do you have any homework?

Child: Yes, I need to write a book report.

Father: So what will you read?

Child: Hmm... I don’t know yet. But I like to read about things that move – cars, trains... Maybe I read **science** book about airplanes! I’ll go to the library tomorrow!

4. 1. 3. Results According to Sentences of Type [+partitive]

One of the aims of this study is to investigate the article choice of L1-Turkish learners of L2-English in [+partitive] contexts.

Table (11) Article Choice in [+partitive] sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

		Articles Supplied				
Context	Target Article	The	A /An	Zero Article	Other	Missing Slots
Type 5 [-definite, +partitive,+specific]	A/An	44/300 14.66%	206/300 68.66%	9/300 3.0%	13/300 4.33%	28/300 9.33%
Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific]	A/An	34/300 11.33%	223/300 74.33%	4/300 1.33%	17/300 5.66%	22/300 7.33%

As illustrated in Table (11) and Figure (3), the participants of the study supplied the target article *a/an* at a rate of 68.66% (206/300) in Type 5 sentences which embody the

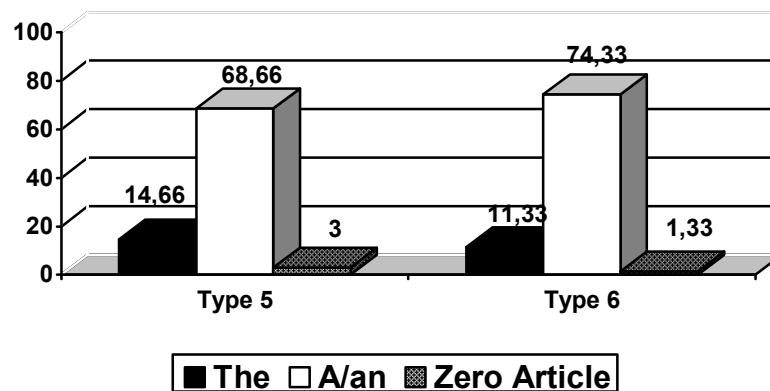
[-definite, +partitive, +specific] context while they provided the target article *a/an* at a rate of 74.33% (223/300) in Type 6 sentences which represent the [-definite, +partitive, -specific] context. The accuracy rate in Type 6 sentences (74.33%) was higher than in Type 5 sentences (68.66%). The total use of *the* in [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and [-definite, +partitive, -specific] contexts was at a rate of 13.0% (78/600). The participants of the study substituted *the* (44/300; 14.66%) in Type 5 sentences more than the *zero article* (9/300; 3.0%) and other words (13/300; 4.33%). Additionally, it was found that in Type 6 sentences *the* (34/300; 11.33%) was also substituted more than the *zero article* (4/300; 1.33%) and other words (17/300; 5.66%). The examples below show the two articles incorrectly provided for Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific] contexts, respectively.

(9) a. **Allison:** Hey, I heard that you had attended Los Angeles Lakers' play-off
Justin: Yes – It was fantastic. I got a signature on my basketball from *the* player.
 He was also the top scorer of the match!

b. **Jason:** What does Alex have in his camp bag? It looks really heavy.
George: Yes, it is too heavy. He could not decide what to bring to the camp site.
 He had book, laptop, radio and camera. He had trouble choosing one. He said he took *the* radio with him, but I have not seen it before, it may be small one.

The article choice of the participants in the [+partitive] contexts was analyzed on the basis of Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific] contexts.

Figure (3) Percentages of *the*, *a/an* and *zero article* in [+partitive] contexts



The results of the independent samples t-tests showed that, there was a significant difference between the performance of the participants in Type 5 and Type 6 sentences ($t=-4.49$, $p<0.05$). When looking at median scores of the two types of sentences, it is apparent that the participants were more successful at providing the correct article in Type 6 ($\bar{x}=3.71$) sentences than in Type 5 sentences ($\bar{x}=3.0$) (See APPENDIX D).

4. 1. 3. 1. Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] Sentences and Proficiency Levels

Table (12) shows the performance of low- and high-proficiency level students in Type 5 sentences denoting [-definite, +partitive, +specific] context.

Table (12) Article Choice in Type 5 sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

Type 5 [-definite,+partitive, +specific]		Articles Supplied				
Level	Target Article	The	A /An	Zero Article	Other	Missing Slots
Low-Proficiency Group	A/An	17/150 11.33%	88/150 58.66%	6/150 4.0%	12/150 8.0%	27/150 18.0%
High-Proficiency Group		27/150 18.0%	118/150 78.66%	3/150 2.0%	1/150 0.66%	1/150 0.66%

Type 5 sentences defining the [-definite, +partitive, +specific] context requires the *a/an* article. As shown in Table (12), low-proficiency level participants supplied *a/an* at a rate of 56.66% (88/150) while high-proficiency level participants provided *a/an* at a rate of 78.66% (118/150), which shows that the latter group performed better. The Mann-Whitney tests also confirmed that the two groups differed from each other significantly ($t=-3.4$, $p<0.05$) in providing the correct article. Participants of the two groups provided *a/an* with the highest rate when compared to *the*, *zero article* and the other words. With respect to substitution errors -except for missing slots- participants in the low-proficiency group supplied *the* to the slots second mostly at a rate of 11.33% (17/150) which was followed by the other words (12/150; 8.0%) and the *zero article* (6/150;

4.0%), respectively. When high-proficiency level participants were taken into consideration, it was found that they substituted *the* (27/150; 18.0%) the second mostly, followed by the *zero article* (3/150; 2.0%) and the other words (1/150; 0.66%). There are two test items given below which were incorrectly completed with the articles other than the target article *a/an*.

(10) a. **Brother:** Did you get anything for our mother's birthday?

Sister: Well, it's a long story. I went to a jewelry store. There were so many things in that jewelry store: bracelets, earrings, necklaces. But I had money for only one thing! So finally, I bought **the** bracelet. It was embedded with Swarovski crystals.

b. **Rudolph:** My friend Janet likes animals a lot. Last week, she decided to get a pet, so she went to a pet shop.

Lisa: Did she find any pets that she liked?

Rudolph: Yes – she saw so many beautiful animals there – puppies, kittens, birds! Janet's parents told her to get just one animal. So Janet bought **the** kitten. It is a white kitten.

4. 1. 3. 2. Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific] Sentences and Proficiency Levels

Table (13) shows the performance of low- and high-proficiency level students in Type 6 sentences denoting the [-definite, +partitive, -specific] context.

Table (13) Article Choice in Type 6 sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific]		Articles Supplied				
Level	Target Article	The	A /An	Zero Article	Other	Missing Slots
Low-Proficiency Group	A/An	17/150 11.33%	93/150 62.0%	4/150 2.66%	14/150 9.33%	22/150 14.66%
		17/150 11.33%	130/150 86.66%	0	3/150 2.0%	0

Type 6 sentences that define the [-definite, +partitive, -specific] context require *a/an*. As seen in Table (13), high-proficiency level participants performed better at providing

a/an for the sentences defining [-definite, +partitive, -specific] context. The low-proficiency group participants provided *a/an* at a rate of 62.0% (93/150) while high-proficiency level participants supplied *a/an* at a rate of 86.66% (130/150). A significant difference between the two groups was found via the Mann-Whitney tests ($t = -4.4$, $p < .05$). The rates of *a/an* suppliance for both of the groups were higher than the suppliance of *the*, *zero article* and other words. In terms of substitution errors, the low-proficiency group substituted *the* at a rate of 11.33 (17/150), *zero article* at a rate of 2.66% (4/150) and other words at a rate of 9.33% (14/150). The high-proficiency group substituted *the* and other words instead of *a/an* at a rate of 11.33% (17/150) and 2.0% (3/150), respectively. Two test items are given below showing how participants supplied incorrect answers to the sentences requiring *a/an*.

(11) a. **Gabrielle:** My son Ralph didn't have anything to read last weekend. So, he went to the library.

Charles: Did he find something to read?

Gabrielle: Oh yes – there were so many wonderful things to read in the library: books, magazines, newspapers! I told Ralph to get just one thing. So finally, Ralph chose **the** magazine. But I don't know which one he took.

b. **Louise:** I just saw Macy and she looked really confused.

Kate: Well, she went shopping to buy a gift for her sister. There were so things to choose from: T-shirts, skirts and coats. Finally, she chose **the** skirt, but I don't know how it is like.

Owing to the fact that this study aims to investigate the role of proficiency levels on the article choice, the performance of the proficiency level groups was analyzed via the independent samples t-tests in terms of providing the correct article to [+partitive] environments. According to the results, the performance of the low-proficiency group and the high-proficiency group differed from each other significantly ($t = -5.52$, $p < 0.05$). The median scores of the participants show that high-proficiency level participants ($\bar{x} = 4.13$) were more successful than the low-proficiency group ($\bar{x} = 3.0$) at providing the correct article to Type 5 and Type 6 sentences even though the high-proficiency level participants incorrectly provided *the* for Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] sentences more frequently than the low-proficiency group.

4. 1. 4. Marking of [+definite] and [-definite] contexts

To investigate the effect of the semantic feature of *definiteness* the following analysis was conducted: two sets of environments where the *definiteness* variable was changing were chosen. These sets are Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific], Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific], Type 4 [+definite, -partitive, -specific]. As seen in the first set, the environments are [-partitive] and [+specific] while the *definiteness* was changing. In the second set, environments are [-partitive] and [-specific] while again *definiteness* was changing again. In order to investigate the effect of *definiteness*, the independent-samples t-tests were performed. For *definiteness*, Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] environments were analyzed and it was found that there was no significant difference between the two types of sentences ($t=.791$, $p>0.05$) on the basis of the performance of the participants (See APPENDIX E). In other words, the participants of the study could recognize *definiteness* and *indefiniteness* in test items and supplied *the* where it is required. The participants' performances of supplying *the* to the [+definite] and *a/an* to the [-definite] environments did not differ from each other. According to the results of the study, the participants supplied *the* in the Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] context and *a/an* in the Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] context. The same analysis was conducted for Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] and Type 4 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences, and a significant difference was not found ($t=-.768$, $p>0.05$). The results showed that participants could discriminate between [+definite] and [-definite] contexts and provided *the* and *a/an* to the sentence types, respectively. In other words, the participants supplied *the* and *a/an* for [+definite, -partitive, -specific] and [-definite, -partitive, -specific] contexts, respectively.

4. 1. 5. Marking of [+definite] and [-definite] contexts by levels of proficiency

The difference between the two proficiency levels was supported by the results of statistical analysis concerning the *definiteness* feature. As mentioned before, in order to find the difference in the marking of *definiteness* between the low- and high-proficiency

levels, the sentence types where only the *definiteness* feature was changing were analyzed. Firstly, the performances in Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] sentences were compared and it was found that there was a significant difference ($t=-7.99$, $p<0.05$) (See APPENDIX F). In other words, the performance of the low- and high-proficiency levels' providing of *the* to [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and *a/an* to [-definite, -partitive, +specific] sentences differed from each other. According to the results of the analysis, the high-proficiency group performed better ($\bar{x} = 4.36$) than the low-proficiency group ($\bar{x} = 2.73$) at providing the correct article in Type 1 and Type 3 sentences. Secondly, the results of the analysis for Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] and Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences also showed that there was a significant difference between proficiency levels ($t=-6.37$, $p<0.05$). The low- proficiency group differed from the high-proficiency group in providing *the* for [+definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences and *a/an* for [-definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences. The high-proficiency group ($\bar{x} = 4.25$) was better than the low-proficiency group at providing the correct article ($\bar{x} = 2.93$).

4. 1. 6. Summary

This section of this chapter presents the results of the test that was administered. The first part of this section includes the results of Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific], Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific], Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences answered by the participants. The second part of this section provides the results of Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific], Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific], Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences according to proficiency levels of the participants. The third part of the study includes results of Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific] sentences answered by the participants. The fourth part includes the article choice in [+definite] and [-definite] contexts. The final part consists of the the article choice in [+definite] and [-definite] contexts by proficiency levels.

4. 2. DISCUSSION

4. 2. 1. Introduction

This part includes the interpretation of the findings of the current study, the discussion of these findings in terms of the initial goals of the study, and an evaluation of these findings in the light of previous studies. As mentioned in preceding chapters, the aim of this study is to investigate the choice of articles by L1-Turkish learners of L2-English in certain semantic contexts. The participants of the study, who were classified into two groups as the low- and high-proficiency level groups, were given a written-elicitation test and asked to fill in the blanks with the appropriate word. The test items used in this study define the [+definite, -partitive, +specific], [+definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, -partitive, +specific], [-definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and [-definite, +partitive, -specific] environments. Each semantic context is represented with 5 sentences in the task. The final aim of this study is to investigate the article use in [+definite], [-definite] contexts; [+specific], [-specific] contexts and [+partitive] and [-partitive] contexts. Lastly, it is aimed to compare the accuracy rates between learners at different proficiency levels, and to investigate the effect of proficiency level on article use. The analysis was carried out via the overuses and accuracy rates. The conclusions were drawn on the basis of the criteria mentioned above.

4. 2. 2. The article choice in [+definite] and [-definite] contexts

Ko et al. (2008) define *definiteness* as a semantic feature that marks a determiner phrase as [+definite] when the speaker assumes that the hearer shares the presupposition of a unique individual. The sentences given below (Ionin et al., 2009:346) exemplify [+definite] and [-definite] contexts, respectively.

(12) a. [+definite, -partitive, +specific]
 Louise: Where's your mother?

Julie: She is meeting *the* principal of my brother's elementary school. He is a very nice man. He is talking to my mother about my brother's grades.

b. [-definite, -partitive, +specific]

Grandfather comes for a visit

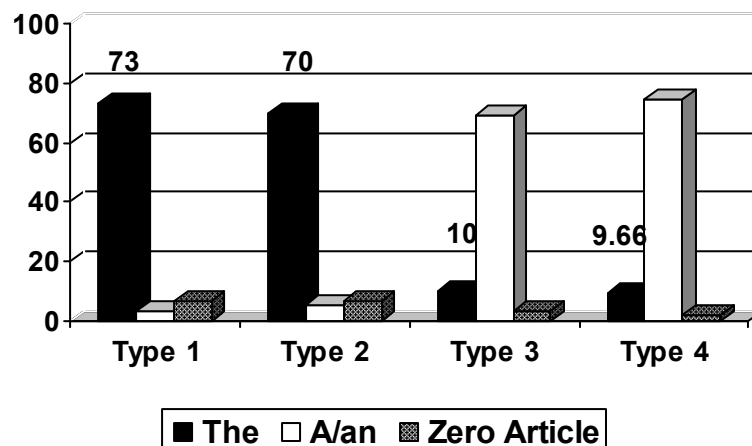
Grandfather: Where is my little granddaughter Beth? Is she at home?

Father: No... She is not going to be back till late. She is having dinner with *a* girl from class – her name is Angie, and Beth really likes her.

The former sentence explains a state in which the salient referent is presupposed by the speaker/writer and the listener/reader; both the speaker/writer and the listener/reader presuppose the existence of a unique *principal*. However; in the latter sentence the speaker/writer and the listener/reader do not presuppose the existence of a unique *girl*.

As stated in Ionin et al. (2003), English is a language that marks only *definiteness* in its article system. Thus, [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and [+definite, -partitive, -specific] environments require *the* while [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and [-definite, -partitive, -specific] environments require *a/an* or *zero article*. The findings of the current study showed that the participants could discriminate between the [+definite, -partitive, +specific], [+definite, -partitive, -specific] and [-definite, -partitive, +specific], [-definite, -partitive, -specific] contexts. Figure (4) shows the uses of articles in Type 1, Type 2, Type 3 and Type 4 sentences.

Figure (4) The uses of *the* in [-partitive] contexts in percent



As illustrated above, the participants of the study performed well at providing *the* to the sentences that define [+definite] environments. The participants supplied *the* to Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences. As mentioned in the results section of the study, in order to investigate whether the participants can discriminate between the two sets of environments, an analysis was performed. This analysis included the comparison of the performance of the participants in Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific], Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific], Type 4 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] environments. The results showed that the participants could discriminate between the [+definite] and [-definite] environments. In other words, the participants of the current study supplied *the* to [+definite] and *a* to [-definite] environments. This finding contradicts the results of Ekiert (2007). Ekiert (2007) found that her subject was more successful at marking *indefiniteness* than *definiteness*. However, the participants of the current study were successful at providing definite and indefinite articles to the obligatory contexts.

One of the results of this study concerning the use of *the* for [+definite, +specific] and *a/an* for [-definite, -specific] environments is in line with previous studies. Huebner (1983) reported the correct use of *the* in the [+definite, +specific] context. It can be said that the participants of the current study showed a similar performance regarding article choice with [+definite, +specific] and [-definite, -specific] contexts. In other words, the participants of the Huebner's (1983) study and the current study supplied definite article to [+definite, +specific] and indefinite article to [-definite, -specific] contexts.

4. 2. 2. 1. The article choice in [+definite] and [-definite] contexts by levels of proficiency

This study also aims to find the article choices of participants of different proficiency levels. The analysis conducted for all participants was repeated for proficiency levels. As mentioned before, the analysis of the sentences with definite and indefinite contexts was used to discern the participants' awareness of *definiteness*.

According to the results of the analysis with the two environment sets which are Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific], Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 2

[+definite, -partitive, -specific], Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific], there was a significant difference between the two proficiency levels on the basis of *definiteness* and *indefiniteness*. The high-proficiency group performed better than the low-proficiency group at providing the correct article for [+definite] and [-definite] contexts.

The findings of the current study about the use of *the* in the different proficiency levels are partly in line with some of the previous studies on the subject. According to the findings of the Ionin and Wexler (2002) study, advanced learners were more accurate in their article use however; *the* overuse persisted for the advanced group of learners. In the current study, *the* overuse did not persist both for the low- and high-proficiency level learners but the latter group was more successful at providing the correct article. In Chaudron and Parker's (1990) study, the participants in the lowest proficiency level performed native-like in terms of indefinite article use. Leung (2001) reported that very high accuracy rates on *the* and *a* were found in L2-English of L1-Chinese speakers. Liu and Gleason (2002) reported the increase of *the*-flooding from low to intermediate level but then a decrease from intermediate to advanced level was observed.

On the other hand, the findings of the current study partly contradict the results of some of the earlier studies investigating the article choice of L2-English learners. Huebner (1983), who examined the article system in the interlanguage of an adult, found that *the* was overgeneralized at the beginner level. Snape (2005) and Bergeron-Matoba (2007) found evidence for the overuse of *the* with specific indefinites in the interlanguage of L2-learners of English. On the other hand, many other studies found evidence for the omission of the article *the* in L2-English. Parrish's (1987) study was among the first to find that the acquisition of *zero article* emerged first, which was followed by *the* and finally *a/an*. Thomas (1989) examined adult L2-English learners and found the overgeneralization of *zero article*. In his study, Master (1987) found the domination of *zero article* and then the emergence of *the* for all contexts. Liu & Gleason's (2002) hypothesis proposing the lack of encoding in the early stages of acquisition was supported by Young's (1996) study. The overuse of *zero article* was reported by many other studies (Robertson, 2000; White, 2003) in even advanced level stages. However, the findings of the current study concerning the overuse of *the* and *zero article* conversely did not reveal any of these uses.

4. 2. 3. The Article Choice in [+specific] and [-specific] Contexts

Specificity, as defined in Ko et al. (2008), is a semantic feature that denotes a state in which the speaker intends to refer to a unique individual who possesses a noteworthy property. The sentences in (13) taken from Ionin et al. (2009:346) are examples of [+specific] and [-specific] contexts, respectively.

(13) a. [-definite, -partitive, +specific]

Grandfather comes for a visit

Grandfather: Where is my little granddaughter Beth? Is she home?

Father: No... She is not going to be back till late. She is having dinner with *a* girl from class – her name is Angie, and Beth really likes her.

b. [-definite, -partitive, -specific]

Mother comes home

Mother: How did Peter spend the day at his grandmother's?

Father: He had a good time. He did his homework for tomorrow. Then he went outside and played with *a* little girl – I don't know who it was. Then he came back inside; and then I came and took him home.

The sentences in (13a) exemplify a state in which *specificity* is established as the speaker/writer and the listener/reader refer to a particular *girl* who possesses a noteworthy property, however; in (13b) the speaker does not refer to a particular *girl*. Ionin et al. (2003) state that English is not a language that marks *specificity*. To exemplify in (13a) the sentence is [+specific] and in (13b) it is [-specific] but both of the sentences receive *a* as they are both indefinite. In other words, specific or nonspecific environments are not marked by a structure on the surface. A [+specific] or [-specific] context may receive *a* or *the* potentially, as it has been mentioned before, what creates the difference is the *definiteness* or *indefiniteness* of the referent.

The substitution of *a/an* for *zero article* was reported in many studies (Goto-Butler, 2002; Master, 1987; Yoon, 1993; Young, 1996). Huebner (1983) reported no use of *a/an* at a stage where *the*-flooding occurred at the end of a one-year-case-study. Parrish (1987) reported that *a/an* emerged at later stages, mainly appearing in [-HK] contexts. Robertson (2000) reported a high rate of omission of *a/an* in obligatory contexts.

In their study Ko et al. (2008) suggested that L2-learners associate *the* with [+specific] contexts and *a/an* with [-specific] contexts. They claimed that this pattern indicated that L2-learners had access to the *specificity* distinction that was not marked in English. According to Ko et al. (2008: 120), it was a result of UG-access to semantic universals.

...L2-learners erroneously associate *the* with the [+specific] feature (instead of [+definite]), and *a* with the [-specific] feature (instead of [-definite])... this error pattern suggests that L2-learners have access to the specificity distinction, which is not overtly marked either by their L1 (Korean, Russian) or by the target language L2 (English). In Ionin et al. (2004), we proposed that such access to specificity is a result of UG-access to semantic universals.

In this study, Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences require *the* while Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific], Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific], Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific] sentences require *a/an*. According to the hypothesis about *specificity* distinction in Ko et al. (2008), L2-learners were expected to provide *the* to [+specific] contexts which are Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific], Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] sentences in this context. Apart from Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] sentences which evidently receive *the* as the NP is definite, Ko et al. (2008) predicted that Type 3 and Type 5 sentences would receive *the*. According to the results of the current study, the participants correctly provided *a/an* to Type 3 and Type 5 sentences instead of using *the*.

The second hypothesis that Ko et al. (2008) proposed about the *specificity* distinction was the overuse of *a/an* in [-specific] contexts. In this study the sentence types which include [-specific] NPs are Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific], Type 4 [-definite, -partitive, -specific] and Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific] sentences. Given that Type 4 and Type 6 sentences naturally receive *a/an* as they are indefinite, Type 2 sentences are the sentences type in which L2-English learners were expected to overuse *a/an*, according to the hypothesis of Ko et al. (2008). However, the results of the current study showed that the participants correctly provided *the* instead of *a/an* to Type 2 sentences which included [-specific] NPs. Thus, Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis about the use of specificity distinction was falsified in this study. As a result, in terms of *specificity* distinction, the findings of this study are not in line with the results of Ko et al. (2008). In the current study, participants showed higher accuracy in providing articles to obligatory contexts than found in Ko et al. (2008).

Some of the studies in the literature partly support the findings of the current study. Master's (1987) pseudo-longitudinal study showed that *a/an* seemed to appear

independently and *a/an* was overused less frequently. Leung (2001) found that learners performed better at providing indefinite articles than definite articles in obligatory contexts. In contrast to the literature, White (2003) found no substitution errors in L2-English of L1-Turkish speaker. The findings of Ionin et al. (2003) reported accuracy in using *a/an* with nonspecific indefinites. Accordingly, it is clear that the participants of the current study performed high accuracy in [+specific] and [-specific] contexts. These findings did not show evidence for Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis.

4. 2. 3. 1. The article choice in [+specific] and [-specific] contexts by levels of proficiency

As mentioned before, Ko et al. (2008) suggested that learners might associate *the* with [+specific] contexts and *a/an* with [-specific] contexts. When the article uses of all participants of the study were analyzed, it was found that the participants did not associate *the* with [+specific] and *a/an* with [-specific] contexts. However, as the current study aims to investigate the role of proficiency on article choice, the article uses of the two proficiency levels were analyzed on the basis of Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis.

According to the results of the current study, neither the low- nor the high-proficiency level participants overused *the* in Type 3 and Type 5 sentences which include [+specific] NPs. However, when looked at the proficiency levels, it is seen that there was a significant difference between the low- and the high-proficiency level participants on the basis of providing *a/an* to Type 3 [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] sentences. The results showed that the high-proficiency level participants were more successful than the low-proficiency participants at providing the correct articles to Type 3 and Type 5 sentences.

Given that Ko et al. (2008) predicted the overuse of *a/an* in [-specific] contexts, the participants of the current study were similarly expected to provide *a/an* to Type 2 sentences which include [-specific] NPs. When the article use of the low- and the high-proficiency level participants was analyzed, it was found that both of the proficiency level groups correctly provided *the* instead of *a/an* to Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences. However, the analysis concerning the proficiency levels showed

that there was a significant difference between the proficiency levels on the basis of providing *the* to Type 2 sentences. According to the results, it is seen that the high-proficiency level participants performed better than the low-proficiency level participants at providing the correct article to the obligatory context.

4. 2. 4. The Article Choice in [+partitive] and [-partitive] Contexts

Partitivity, is defined in Enç (1991), as a semantic feature that makes reference to the presupposition assumed by the speaker and the hearer about the existence of a referent of a set denoted by NP. The sentences taken from the test of the current study exemplify [+partitive] and [-partitive] environments, respectively.

(14) a. [-definite, +partitive, +specific]

Sophie: How did you spend your week-end at your cottage?

Elise: Well, the weather was terrible. I couldn't go outside! I had absolutely nothing to do! So, finally, I went to a video store. There were lots of videos, DVDs, and games! I had money for just one thing. So I rented *a* video. It was 'Matrix Reloaded' starring Keanu Reeves.

b. [-definite, -partitive, +specific]

Father comes home

Father: Thank you for taking care of Karen. How did you spend the day?

Baby-sitter: Well, we went to a park. Karen played in the sandbox for a while. And then she met *a* beautiful friendly dog – he was very well-behaved, and Karen played with him for almost an hour.

The sentences in (14a) define the [+partitive] context which means that the speaker and the hearer share the presupposition of a unique *video* in a set of *videos*, *DVDs* and *games*. On the other hand, in the sentences in (14b) the speaker does not assume the presupposition of the existence of a *dog*, as set membership is not established. Ko et al. (2008) state that *partitivity* is a semantic feature that is not overtly marked in English. Therefore, the sentences in (14a) and (14b) receive the article *a*, as both sentences are indefinite. As can be clearly understood, *partitivity* is not marked on surface. Ko et al. (2008) claim that even though *partitivity* is not marked on DP, it can be observed in L2-learners' article choice via association to the *partitivity* feature. Ko et al.'s (2008: 123-124) hypothesis predicted the overuse of *the* with indefinites in [+partitive] or

[+specific] contexts; or maximal use of *the* with indefinites in [+partitive, +specific] contexts.

In this study, Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, -specific] sentences include [+partitive] NPs. As mentioned before, these environments require *a/an* regardless of their partitive feature. According to Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis, the participants of the current study were expected to overuse *the* in Type 5 and Type 6 sentences. However, according to the results of the study, the participants did not overuse *the* in indefinite [+partitive] contexts. Participants of the study used *a/an* correctly in [+partitive] environments. The results of the participants' article use in [+partitive] contexts contradict the hypothesis (Ko et al., 2008) suggesting *the* overuse in [+partitive] contexts.

According to Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis, L2-English learners were expected to overuse *the* in [-definite, +partitive, +specific] contexts at maximum level. In the current study, Type 5 sentences define the [-definite, +partitive, +specific] context in which the maximal overuse of *the* was expected. However, the results of the current study revealed that all participants used *a/an* instead of *the* in [-definite, +partitive, +specific] context. Finally, it is clear that the findings of the current study did not support the hypothesis about the *partitivity* that was proposed by Ko et al.'s (2008) study.

4. 2. 4. 1. The article choice in [+partitive] and [-partitive] contexts by levels of proficiency

Ko et al. (2008) hypothesized that learners might fluctuate between the choices of article use in their L2-English. As mentioned before their claim was the overuse of *the* in indefinites with [+partitive] or [+specific] contexts; or maximal use of *the* in indefinites with [+partitive, +specific] context.

According to the results of the study, neither the low- nor the high-proficiency group overused *the* in indefinites with [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and [-definite, +partitive, -specific] environments. However; when the participants' uses of *a/an* were compared between the two proficiency groups, it can be seen that the high proficiency group was more successful at providing the correct article in Type 5 and Type 6 sentences which included [+partitive] NPs. When the prediction made by Ko et al.

(2008), which was concerning the maximal use of *the* in indefinites with [+partitive, +specific] context is taken into consideration, it is seen that neither of the proficiency level participants overused *the* in Type 5 sentences. However, the difference between the low-proficiency and the high-proficiency groups was found in their uses of the correct article in Type 5 sentences. The results of the study showed that high-proficiency level participants performed better at providing *a/an* to Type 5 sentences. The findings of the study revealed that Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis was not valid even for participants at different proficiency levels. Therefore, the results of the current study are not in line with the findings of Ko et al.'s (2008) study in which the participants from different proficiency levels were tested for their article use on the basis of *partitivity* feature.

4. 2. 5. The Article Choice in L2-English

The current study bore a number of findings for future studies concerning the article choice in L2-English. Results of the research were analyzed on the basis of *definiteness*, *specificity*, *partitivity* and levels of proficiency.

To start with one of the semantic features, *definiteness*, it was found that participants of this study, who were L1-Turkish L2-English learners, were quite accurate at using the article *the* in obligatory contexts. The omission rate of the article *the* in the current study was much lower than other studies (Parrish, 1987; Thomas, 1989; Master 1987; Robertson, 2000; White, 2003). Secondly, Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis on *specificity* distinction was found to be not valid for the participants of the current study. As mentioned at various points throughout the present study, Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis, predicting association of article *the* with [+specific] and *a/an* with [-specific] contexts was not confirmed. The participants of the study did not overuse definites for the indefinite specific context. Thirdly, the results of the study revealed that participants used *the* correctly in indefinites with [+partitive] and [+specific] contexts. Thus, Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis concerning the overuse of *the* in definites with [+partitive] or [+specific] contexts; or maximal use of *the* in indefinites with [+partitive, +specific] contexts are not in line with the results of the current study.

On the basis of article choice in L2-English by the speakers of different levels of proficiency, the present study showed notable similarities to previous studies. According to these studies, there is a significant difference in article choice between proficiency levels (Kharma, 1981; Yamada & Matsuura, 1982; Parrish, 1987; Master, 1987, 1997; Thomas, 1989; Chaudron & Parker, 1990; Yoon, 1993; Murphy, 1997; Mizuno, 1999; Robertson, 2000; Leung, 2001; Lu, 2001; Goto-Butler, 2002; Jarvis, 2002; Liu & Gleason, 2002; Ekiert, 2004; Yılmaz, 2006; Batanieh, 2005; Ekiert, 2007; Önen, 2007; among others). These differences between levels of proficiency were interpreted on the basis of various factors. In one of these studies, Ekiert (2007) stated that especially at the beginning levels, learners were affected by their first language, therefore the overuse of *zero article* can be observed in their L2-English. On the other hand, Humphrey (2007) claimed that as learners' proficiency level decreased, the more they tended to rely on static, local contextual clues while they were using articles in their L2-English. Goto-Butler (2002) reported that as higher proficiency level learners consider more of the contextual information; their command in article usage became more native-like. Goto-Butler (2002) added that especially in the fill-in-the-blank task, lower proficiency learners relied upon the rules that they learned from their teachers and textbooks. Ionin et al. (2009) explained the difference between proficiency levels in terms of strategies used by the learners. According to Ionin et al. (2009), the higher proficiency level learners relied on implicit knowledge instead of explicit strategies while using the English article system. Kim (2006) commented on the off-line results of her study and stated that as the learners' proficiency level in English increased, they became more successful at resetting the parameter from *specificity* to *definiteness*. Sarko (2008) argued that the results of the lower proficiency group in his study could be explained by the difficulty that his participants faced in mapping syntactic knowledge onto phonological components. The results of the current study which supported the evidence of difference in the performance of proficiency levels could be interpreted on the basis of the tendency to use implicit knowledge as the exposure to target language increases.

4. 2. 6. The Article Choice in L1- Turkish Speakers' L2- English

The effect of L1 has played an important role on the studies concerning article choice in L2-English. Whether L2-English learners transfer the semantic features that are marked in their L1 has been discussed extensively. When focusing on the studies which investigated article use in L1-Turkish learners' L2-English, it can be said that they partly supported the results of the current study. In her study, Yılmaz (2006:89) reported a high rate of suppliance of correct articles to the obligatory contexts in picture description, writing and fill-in-the-article tasks. She suggested that L1-Turkish learners could acquire the English article system despite the absence of an article system in their native language. According to Yılmaz (2006), the results of her study did not show clear evidence of a persistent L1 effect in the use of the English article system. She added that the variety in the use of article choice was less common at the advanced level, which reveals that it was not a permanent problem as it decreased as the proficiency level increased.

In her study investigating the performance of different proficiency levels on different task types, Önen (2007:102) found that the accuracy of article use varied in respect to proficiency levels and task types. She briefly mentioned the role of L1, when discussing the difficulties that learners faced in some NP contexts. She suggested that this finding might be due to the fact that Turkish and English were two distinct languages expressing the same meanings by different syntactic devices. White (2003) reported in her study that a L1-Turkish learner of L2-English supplied *the* and *a/an* for definite and indefinite contexts correctly and never used definites in indefinite contexts and vice versa.

When compared with English, Turkish has different encodings in terms of semantic features. According to Kornfilt (1997:273) and Underhill (1987:38), Turkish does not encode *definiteness* with a definite article while it marks indefiniteness with indefinite article *bir* (Kornfilt, 1997). On the other hand, as mentioned in Hawkins (2001:232), English marks *definiteness* and *indefiniteness* with its definite (the) and indefinite articles (a, zero article). On the basis of *specificity*, Turkish does not encode *specificity* with an article but with overt case marking (Enç, 1991:4). Similarly, English marks NPs with an article in terms of *definiteness* not with *specificity*. Thirdly, *partitivity*, as a

subtype of presuppositionality, is not marked with an article in English. *Partitivity* is marked in Turkish with the use of the accusative case marking instead of an article. Finally, when the two languages are compared, it can be said that Turkish marks only *indefiniteness* with indefinite determiner, *bir* (Kornfilt, 1997:275); while English only marks *definiteness* and *indefiniteness* with articles. Turkish marks *indefiniteness*, *specificity* via possessives, deictic terms, word order, modality, stress (Dede, 1986).

The results of this study did not provide strong evidence for an L1-Turkish effect on the choice of L2-English article system. L1-Turkish learners of L2-English were expected to transfer the lack of the definite article in their native language to their interlanguage and show poor performance on providing article *the* to the obligatory contexts. However, as mentioned before, the results of the current study did not reveal a transfer from L1-Turkish as the participants were found to be successful at providing *the* to the obligatory contexts.

4. 2. 7. Fluctuation Hypothesis and Definiteness Pattern

Ionin et al. (2003) stated that L2-English learners fluctuated between the settings of Article Choice Parameter. As mentioned previously, Article Choice Parameter suggests Setting I in which articles mark *specificity* and Setting II in which articles mark *definiteness*. According to Ionin et al. (2003), L2-English learners have access to Setting I and Setting II; however when they have insufficient input they fluctuate between the two settings. Ionin et al. (2003: 248) summarized L2-English fluctuation pictorially as follows.

Table (14) Article use cross-linguistically: patterns for L2-English

<i>DP type</i>	Setting I	Setting II		L2-English fluctuation	
Non-specific indefinites	a	a		a	a
Specific indefinites	the	a		a	the
Definites	the	the		the	the

According to Ionin et al.'s (2003) proposal, if L2-English learners follow Setting I, they are expected to use *the* with definites and specific indefinites and *a* with non-specific indefinites. If they follow the patterns of Setting II, they are expected to use *the* with definites and article *a* with non-specific and specific definites. On the other hand, learners are expected to use *a* with non-specific indefinites and *the* with definites but fluctuate between *a* and *the*, if they follow the L2-English fluctuation pattern. The striking point is that non-specific indefinites receive *a* and definites receive *the* in Setting I, Setting II and the L2-English fluctuation pattern whereas article choice with specific indefinites seems problematic as it is where the fluctuation is experienced. Considering the results of the current study, it can be said that the participants followed Setting II pattern. In other words, L2-English learners of the study used articles marking *definiteness*. The performance of L1-Turkish speakers of L2-English is given in Table (15).

Table (15) Article use cross-linguistically: L1-Turkish speakers of L2-English

<i>DP type</i>	Setting I	Setting II	L2-English fluctuation		L1-Turkish speakers of L2-English
Non-specific indefinites	a	a	a	a	a
Specific indefinites	the	a	a	the	a
Definites	the	the	the	the	the

The findings of the current study showed that the participants were quite accurate at using *the* with definites and *a/an* with non-specific indefinites and specific indefinites. The target-like pattern of article use in L2-English revealed that the participants did not fluctuate between two articles. In their study Ionin et al. (2003) suggested five patterns of article use shown by L2-learners. One of these patterns was *The Definiteness Pattern* which was described by Ionin et al. (2003: 254) as follows.

The Definiteness Pattern (target-like grammar)
 (adopting Setting II of the Article Choice Parameter)
 high use of *the* with definites only
 little or no overuse of *the* with indefinites

The findings of the study supported the Ionin et al.'s (2003) pattern predicted for L2-English. As stated above, the participants adopted Setting II of the Article Choice Parameter and used the article *the* with definites and *a/an* with specific or non-specific indefinites. The fact that the overuse of *the* was not observed in the present study revealed that the hypothesis predicting the association of *the* with *specificity* by the L2-English learners was not supported.

4. 2. 8. Summary

The current study aims to find the article choice of L2-English learners. In the discussion section of this study, the findings are discussed on the basis of proficiency levels, accuracy rates, the hypotheses proposed in the earlier studies and the agreement of the findings with the previous conclusions drawn. In the first part of this section article choice in all types of contexts are discussed on the basis of all participants and levels of proficiency. The second part of the discussion section includes the agreement of the findings of the current study with previous studies in terms of article choice in L2-English. The fourth part consists of the role of L1 on the choice of article use and previous findings investigating L1-Turkish speakers. The final part includes the discussion of Fluctuation Hypothesis and Definiteness pattern on the basis of the findings of the current study.

5. CONCLUSION

5. 1. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to investigate the article choice in L1-Turkish learners' L2-English. The test instrument, which was a 40-item written elicitation task, included 30 test items and 10 fillers. The participants were asked to fill in the blanks with the word that they thought was appropriate. Thirty test items were categorized into 6 sentence types with [+definite, -partitive, +specific], [+definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, -partitive, +specific], [-definite, -partitive, -specific], [-definite, +partitive, +specific] and [-definite, +partitive, -specific] contexts. The first two sentence types that define [+definite] contexts require *the* while other contexts that are [-definite] environments require *a/an*. The answers provided by the participants were coded in 4 labels that were *the*, *a/an*, *dash* and *other* words. The test was administered to 60 students (33 females and 27 males) who were studying at Middle East Technical University (METU), an English-medium university in Ankara, Turkey. The participants were chosen according to their proficiency levels. The first group included 30 low-proficiency level students who were taking the DBE (Department of Basic English) 101 Beginner's Level course and studying at the Department of Basic English. The second group consisted of 30 high-proficiency students taking the ENG (English) 311 Advanced Communication Skills course and studying at different departments (See APPENDIX G). Participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were asked to complete the task within 25 minutes in a classroom setting. The answers were analyzed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

5. 2. FINDINGS

Findings were discussed answering the research questions of the current study. Four research questions provide answers about the article choice in L1-Turkish speakers' L2-English.

5. 2. 1. How Do L1-Turkish Speakers Mark *Definiteness* in [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and [+definite, -partitive, -specific] Sentences?

A semantic feature, *definiteness* is defined in Ko et al. (2008:119) as a shared state of knowledge between the speaker and the hearer.

If a Determiner Phrase (DP) of the form [D NP] is [+definite], then the speaker assumes that the hearer shares the presupposition of the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by NP.

As mentioned before, English is a language which marks *definiteness* (Ionin et al., 2003). Thus, definite sentences, in which the speaker assumes that the hearer shares the presupposition of a unique individual, require *the*.

In the current study, the participants were expected to provide *the* for Type 1 [+definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 2 [+definite, -partitive, -specific] sentences. According to the results of the study, the participants provided *the* for Type 1 sentences at a rate of 73%. Similarly, the participants provided *the* at a rate of 70% for Type 2 sentences. These percentages show that the participants in this study marked *definiteness* with *the*. The overuse of *a/an* and *zero article* in definite contexts was not so high that it outnumbered the use of *the* in obligatory contexts. In this study, the participants overused *a/an* at a rate of 3.66% and *zero article* at a rate of 7.0% in Type 1 sentences. For Type 2 sentences, the participants' overuse of *a/an* was at a rate of 5.33% and *zero article* was of 7.0%. When compared to the use of the article *the*, the rates did not show evidence for the overuse of *a/an* and *zero article* in definite contexts.

When looking at previous studies, it was found that the participants varied according to their choice of the article in the definite contexts. Ekiert (2007) found that her Polish subject was more accurate at marking indefinite sentences. Leung (2001) reported that his Japanese participants were more accurate in the use of the indefinite articles than the definite articles in spite of the high accuracy rates in the suppliance of the articles. On the other hand, Huebner (1983) found that the use of *the* in [+definite, +specific] environments was relatively high. The results of the current research are in line with the studies supporting accurate use of *the* in definite contexts.

5. 2. 2. How Do L1-Turkish Speakers Mark *Indefiniteness* in [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and [-definite, -partitive, -specific] Sentences?

If *definiteness*, as defined above, is the shared state of knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, then *indefiniteness* is a state of knowledge that the speaker and the hearer do not share. Ionin & Wexler (2002: 150) define the term as follows:

A DP is definite iff its referent is known to both speaker and hearer, and is unique in the contextually relevant domain. Otherwise, the DP is indefinite.

In English, a language marking *definiteness* (Ionin et al., 2003), *indefiniteness* is marked using *a/an* for indefinite, count, singular nouns and *zero article* for indefinite, mass and plural nouns (Sarko, 2008). In the present study, Type 3 and Type 4 sentences define the indefinite [-partitive] environments. In Type 3 sentences defining [-definite, -partitive, +specific] and Type 4 sentences defining [-definite, -partitive, -specific] context, the participants were expected to provide *a/an* to the slots. As mentioned above, indefinite, mass and plural nouns require *zero articles*; however, in order to prevent confusion between the coding of missing slots and *zero articles*, no indefinite, mass and plural noun was given in the task. Thus, all indefinite sentences in the test require *a/an*. When looking at the performance of the participants, in Type 3 sentences [-definite, -partitive, +specific] they used *a/an* at rate of 69.33% and in Type 4 sentences [-definite, -partitive, -specific] at a rate of 74.66%. Therefore, it is clear that the participants of the current study marked *indefiniteness* using *a/an* in the obligatory contexts.

When looking at the overuse of words apart from *a/an*, it was found that in Type 3 sentences, the participants overused *the* at a rate of 10.0% and *zero article* at a rate of 3.33%. In Type 4 sentences the participants overused *the* at a rate of 9.66% and *zero article* at a rate of 2.33%. The conclusion drawn from the findings in indefinite contexts shows that the overuse of *the* or *zero article* did not outnumber the use of *a/an* in indefinite contexts.

According to the previous studies, like *definiteness*, the marking of *indefiniteness* varies. Leung (2001) and Ekiert (2007) reported that their participants performed better at providing the appropriate article for the indefinite sentences. Ko et al. (2008) suggested that the learners from different L1s overused *the* in [+specific] environments.

This study provided evidence that L1-Turkish learners of L2-English did not overuse *the* for specific nouns (Type 3 sentences [-definite, -partitive, +specific]) thus, the article *the* was not associated with *specificity*. Finally, it can be said that the participants of this study marked *indefiniteness* using *a/an* in the obligatory contexts.

5. 2. 3. How Do L1-Turkish Speakers Mark *Indefiniteness* in [+partitive] Sentences?

Partitivity is a state of knowledge in which DP is a member of a set that has been introduced in discourse before. Ko et al. (2006:173) define the term as follows:

If a DP is [+partitive], it denotes an individual that is a member of a set introduced by previous discourse.

As it was mentioned before, English encodes *definiteness* (Ionin et al., 2003), therefore *partitivity* is not marked on the surface. Then, a [+partitive] or [-partitive] DP is expected to be marked according to its *definiteness*.

In the current study, Type 5 and Type 6 sentences represent partitive DPs. Type 5 sentences define [-definite, +partitive, +specific] context, Type 6 sentences define [-definite, +partitive, -specific] context. Type 5 and Type 6 sentences require *a/an* as *partitivity* is not marked on the surface. Mass and plural DPs that require *zero article* were not used in the task. The performance of the participants on [+partitive] sentences was found successful, in other words, the participants of this study marked *partitivity* of the DPs according to *definiteness*. Participants provided *a/an* in Type 5 sentences at a rate of 68.66% and in Type 6 sentences at a rate of 74.33%.

The overuse of *the* and *zero article* in [+partitive] sentences is as follows: *the* was overused at a rate of 14.66% and *zero article* was overused at a rate of 3.0% in Type 5 sentences. In Type 6 sentences the overuse of *the* was at a rate of 11.33% and *zero article* was at a rate of 1.33%. Overall it can be said that the overuse of *the* and *zero article* was weak when compared to the use of *a/an*.

Ko et al. (2008) stated that as *partitivity* is not marked in English, L2-English learners overused *the* in indefinite [+partitive] or [+specific] contexts, the overuse reached

maximum level in [+partitive, +specific] contexts. In this study Type 5 and Type 6 sentences conform to Ko et al.'s (2008) hypothesis; both of the sentences are [+partitive], thus it was expected that the participants would overuse the article *the*. However, it was found that the overuse of the article *the* was at a rate of 14.66% in Type 6 sentences and it was at a rate of 11.33% in Type 5 sentences [-definite, +partitive, +specific] where maximal use of *the* was expected. It is clear that the participants of this study did not associate *partitivity* with *the*. Thus the findings of this study contradict the findings of Ko et al. (2008).

5. 2. 4. Does Accuracy of Article Use Vary in All Types of Sentences with Respect to Proficiency Level?

One of the research questions of the study concerns whether the proficiency level affects the performance of article use in L2-English of L1-Turkish speakers. According to the results of the study, both the low-proficiency and high-proficiency groups provided correct articles for the obligatory contexts. However, the rates of accuracy differed from each other. In this study the high-proficiency level group was more accurate at using English articles than the low-proficiency level group.

When looking at this difference on the basis of sentence type, the performance of the proficiency levels provided better evidence. According to the results of the independent samples t-tests, in Type 1 sentences that define [+definite, -partitive, +specific] context and require *the*, there was a significant difference between the low- and high-proficiency groups ($t = -6.8, p < .05$). The suppliance rates of *the* in Type 1 sentences also supported the findings (the low-proficiency group, 54.66%; the high-proficiency group, 91.33%). Type 2 sentences defining [+definite, -partitive, -specific] context require *the*. The difference between the proficiency levels was observed in the results of the independent samples t-tests ($t = -4.6, p < .05$). It can be said that the high-proficiency group (84.0%) performed better at providing *the* in the obligatory contexts than the low-proficiency group (56.0%). Type 3 sentences defining [-definite, -partitive, +specific] environment require *a/an* in the obligatory context. The results of the independent samples t-tests showed that the proficiency level groups differed from each other at providing the correct article ($t = -4.6, p < .05$). The high-proficiency group (83.33%) was

more successful at providing *a/an* in the obligatory contexts than the low-proficiency level group (55.33%) was. In Type 4 sentences [-definite, -partitive, -specific] that require *a/an*, the participants' performances were found to differ on the basis of the proficiency levels ($t = -4.2$, $p < .05$). In Type 4 sentences the high-proficiency group's (86.0%) performance at providing *a/an* was higher than the low-proficiency level group's (63.33%) performance. As mentioned before, Type 5 and Type 6 sentences are the sentences that investigate the article choice of the participants in [+partitive] environments. When looking at the results in detail, in Type 5 sentences [-definite, +partitive, +specific], it is seen that there was a significant difference between the proficiency levels ($t = -3.4$, $p < .05$). The high-level group (78.66%) performed better than the low-proficiency group (58.66%). Finally, in Type 6 sentences [-definite, +partitive, -specific], a significant difference between the proficiency levels was observed ($t = -4.4$, $p < .05$). Similarly, the performance of the high-proficiency group (86.66%) was higher than of low-proficiency group (62.0%).

The findings of the current study, concerning the effect of proficiency level on the choice of the English article system, are in line with previous studies. The performance of the learners varies according to their proficiency levels (Kharma, 1981; Yamada & Matsuura, 1982; Parrish, 1987; Master, 1987, 1997; Thomas, 1989; Chaudron & Parker, 1990; Yoon, 1993; Murphy, 1997; Mizuno, 1999; Robertson, 2000; Leung, 2001; Lu, 2001; Goto-Butler, 2002; Jarvis, 2002; Liu & Gleason, 2002; Ekiert, 2004; Kim, 2006; Yılmaz, 2006; Batanieh, 2005; Ekiert, 2007; Humphrey, 2007; Önen, 2007; Sarko, 2008; Ionin et al., 2009). It can be said that L1-Turkish speakers' performance varied on the basis of their article choice in L2-English.

The current study is expected to contribute to the area of EFL. The results of this study offer teachers and curriculum designers suggestions for what to focus on and how to focus on in foreign language teaching. Teachers of EFL can make use of the results of the current study by developing appropriate lesson plans, testing what has been taught and evaluating the outcomes on article acquisition of L1-Turkish speakers. On the other hand, curriculum planners can take the findings into consideration on the basis of the article choice of the L1-Turkish speakers, develop the curriculum according to uses of the articles by the target learner group and revisit some parts concerning the teaching and testing of the English article system.

5. 5. SUMMARY

In this part of the study, an overview of the research which includes the summary of the methodology is given. Following the summary, the research questions of the study concerning the marking of *definiteness* in [+definite] contexts; *indefiniteness* in [-definite] contexts; *indefiniteness* in [+partitive] contexts and the effect of the article choice in these contexts are discussed, respectively. The answers to these questions are based on the conclusions drawn in the results and the discussion sections of the study and from previous studies.

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APPENDIX A

Participation by levels of proficiency in other languages

			Low-proficiency Group	High-proficiency Group
Languages	Language 1	Beginner	3	9
		Intermediate	-	4
		Advanced	-	-
	Language 2	Beginner	-	3
		Intermediate	-	-
		Advanced	-	-
	Language 3	Beginner	-	-
		Intermediate	-	-
		Advanced	-	-

APPENDIX B

Test Instrument

*This test consists of 40 short dialogues. Your job is to fill in the blank with the word that you feel is appropriate for each context. It is important that you rely on your feelings. Examples of appropriate words are **a, the, she, he, not, to, her, my, from**, etc. You may also put a dash (-) in the blank to indicate that no word is needed. You may sometimes feel that there is more than one possible answer; in that case please choose the answer that sounds best in the given context.*

1. *Buying groceries*

Salesclerk: Welcome to our store. May I help you?

Customer: Where is the dairy section? I would like to buy my daughter some cheese. _____ is hungry.

2. *At a bookstore*

Chris: Well, I've bought everything that I wanted. Are you ready to go?

Mike: Almost. Can you please wait a few minutes? I want to talk to _____ owner of this bookstore – she is a very nice lady, and I always say hi to her.

3. *Father comes home*

Father: Thank you for taking care of Karen. How did you spend the day?

Baby-sitter: Well, we went to a park. Karen played in the sandbox for a while. And then she met _____ beautiful friendly dog – he was very well-behaved, and Karen played with him for almost an hour.

4. *Sophie:* How did you spend your week-end at your cottage?

Elise: Well, the weather was terrible. I couldn't go outside! I had absolutely nothing to do! So, finally, I went to a video store. There were lots of videos, DVDs, and games! I had money for just one thing. So I rented _____ video. It was 'Matrix Reloaded' starring Keanu Reeves.

5. *At an ice cream parlor*

Younger Sister: What ice cream flavor would you like?

Older Sister: Chocolate ice cream would be nice.

Younger Sister: I don't like chocolate very much. I prefer _____ vanilla.

6. *Marcus:* Can you and your friend Rick come over this week-end?

Jim: I'll come over, but Rick isn't here. He went to _____ house of his uncle. I have no idea where that is. But Rick was very excited about going!

7. *Jessie:* I had my first babysitting job yesterday.

Lesley: How was it?

Jessie: Fine. It was a little boy named "Niles". I played a monopoly game with him. Then I did my homework, and Niles read _____ short story – I don't know what it was about. And then I put him to bed.

8. **Gabrielle:** My son Ralph didn't have anything to read last weekend. So, he went to the library.
Charles: Did he find something to read?
Gabrielle: Oh yes – there were so many wonderful things to read in the library: books, magazines, newspapers! I told Ralph to get just one thing. So finally, Ralph chose _____ magazine. But I don't know which one he took.
9. *At the bus station*
Mildred: Where is the bus? It was supposed to come five minutes ago!
Station Attendant: I'm sorry. The schedule has changed. The bus will _____ come today.
10. **Mother:** What are you reading in the newspaper?
Daughter: I'm reading a poem about baby lions – I really like it. I would like to write a letter to _____ author of that poem – unfortunately, I have no idea who it is... The poem isn't signed!
11. *Mother comes home*
Mother: How did Peter spend the day at his grandmother's?
Father: He had a good time. He did his homework for tomorrow. Then he went outside and played with _____ little girl – I don't know who it was.
12. **Mother:** What did you and Kenny do yesterday, when I wasn't here?
Father: Well, we went shopping. Kenny needed something to write with. We went to a store that had lots of pencils, pens, and markers. I told Kenny he could buy just one thing. So he bought _____ pen. I have no idea which one.
13. **Kevin:** Your sister's name is Katherine, right?
Larry: No, you've got it all wrong.
Kevin: I'm sorry. Is her name Cameron?
Larry: Wrong again! That is _____ her name! It's Candice!
14. *At the end of a running race*
Laura: Are you ready to leave?
Betsy: No, not yet. First, I need to talk to _____ winner of this race – he is my good friend, and I want to congratulate him!
15. **Father:** How did little Billy spent the evening yesterday, when I wasn't here?
Mother: He did all his homework! And he read _____ very interesting story: it's about a small fishing village in Portugal, and the lives of the people who live there. He told me all about it.
16. **Brother:** Did you get anything for our mother's birthday?
Sister: Well, it's a long story. I went to a jewelry store. There were so many things in that jewelry store: bracelets, earrings, necklaces. But I had money for only one thing! So finally, I bought _____ bracelet. It was embedded with Swarovski crystals.
17. **Lee:** Where have you been? I've been looking all over for you.
Jenny: I went to the music store, and I bought some CDs.
Lee: Really? My friend and I _____ planning to go there later today.
Jenny: What a coincidence!

- 18. Dominique:** I heard that your sister went on vacation. Where did she go?
Raquel: Europe. She spent two weeks in _____ capital of France: Paris. It's a beautiful city, and she really enjoyed her trip.
- 19. Grandfather comes for a visit**
Grandfather: Where is my little granddaughter Beth? Is she home?
Father: No. She is not going to be back till late. She is having dinner with _____ girl from class – her name is Angie, and Beth really likes her.
- 20. Marian:** Guess what! I just started working on the school newspaper. I take photographs!
Jim: So what photographs have you taken so far?
Marian: Well, I went to a park. At first I took photographs of flowers and trees. But I wanted to practice on people, too! There were lots of people in the park – adults and children. I photographed _____ child. She was Mrs. Dowson's daughter Alice.
- 21. At the supermarket**
Salesperson: Hello! What can I help you with today?
Customer: I'm looking for tomatoes to make spaghetti sauce _____ dinner.
- 22. Ruby:** It's already 4pm. Why isn't your little brother home from school?
Angela: He just called and told me that he got in trouble! He is talking to _____ principal of his school! I don't know who that is. I hope my brother comes home soon.
- 23. After school**
Father: Do you have any homework?
Child: Yes, I need to write a book report.
Father: So what will you read?
Child: Hmm... I don't know yet. But I like to read about things that move – cars, trains... Maybe I read _____ book about airplanes! I'll go to the library tomorrow!
- 24. Louise:** I just saw Macy and she looked really confused.
Kate: Well, she went shopping to buy a gift for her sister. There were so things to choose from: T-shirts, skirts and coats. Finally, she chose _____ skirt, but I don't know how it is like.
- 25. Cynthia:** Jill, does Amy like hamburgers?
Jill: No, I don't think so.
Cynthia: Really? Why?
Jill: She does _____ like to eat meat.
- 26. At a toy store**
Sales clerk: May I help you?
Client: Yes! I am very angry. I bought a toy for my child at this store, but it's broken! I want to talk to _____ owner of this store – I don't care who that is! I am going to complain!
- 27. In a school**
Child: It's my birthday next week!
Teacher: That's great. Are you going to have a party?
Child: Yes! A big party! I am hoping to get _____ new dog! I love animals!

- 28. Michelle:** I saw your son at shopping center last week.
Sarah: Right, he went there to buy a present for his girl friend. There were so many expensive things to buy, walkmans, ipods, CD Players. He said that he bought _____ ipod, but I have not seen it yet.
- 29. Leon:** I think I need to relax for a little bit. My life has been so busy!
Patrick: Really?
Leon: Yeah, I've been so busy that I forgot _____ own birthday!
- 30. Tamara:** Hi, Genie. How is your brother George doing?
Genie: Great! Last week-end, he went to visit his friend Ben. He stayed at _____ house of Ben's parents – it's a very beautiful house near a lake!
- 31. In a "Lost and Found"**
Clerk: Can I help you? Are you looking for something you lost?
Customer: Yes... I realize you have a lot of things here, but maybe you have what I need. You see, I am looking for _____ green scarf. My little daughter lost it here yesterday, and she is very upset!
- 32. Rudolph:** My friend Janet likes animals a lot. Last week, she decided to get a pet, so she went to a pet shop.
Lisa: Did she find any pets that she liked?
Rudolph: Yes – she saw so many beautiful animals there – puppies, kittens, birds! Janet's parents told her to get just one animal. So Janet bought _____ kitten. It is a white kitten.
- 33. Maria:** Mother, have you seen my blue coat? I would like to wear it to school today.
Mother: No, I haven't dear. Ask your sister. Maybe she knows where it _____.
- 34. Eric:** I really liked that book you gave me for my birthday. It was very interesting!
Laura: Thanks! I like it too. I would like to meet _____ author of that book some day – I saw an interview with her on TV, and I really liked her!
- 35. In an airport, in a crowd of people**
Man: Excuse me, do you work here?
Security guard: Yes. Can I help you?
Man: Yes, please. I am trying to find _____ red-haired girl; I think that she flew in on Flight 239.
- 36. Allison:** Hey, I heard that you had attended Los Angeles Lakers' play-off
Justin: Yes – It was fantastic. I got a signature on my basketball from _____ player. He was also the top scorer of the match!
- 37. Phone conversation**
Angela: Hello! May I speak to Alicia, please?
Fiona: Oh, I'm sorry. She's not in right now. She went _____ a store at the mall.
- 38. After a girls' soccer game at school**
Child: Excuse me! Can you please let me in?
Coach: What do you need?

Child: I am a reporter for my school newspaper! I need to talk to _____ winner of this game – I don't know who she is, so can you please help me?

39. Rose: Will you come shopping with me this week-end?

Jen: Sure. Where do you want to go?

Rose: Oh, anywhere. I am looking for _____ warm hat. It's getting rather cold outside!

40. Jason: What does Alex have in his camp bag? It looks really heavy.

George: Yes, it is too heavy. He could not decide what to bring to the camp site. He had book, laptop, radio and camera. He had trouble choosing one. He said he took _____ radio with him, but I have not seen it before, it may be small one.

APPENDIX C

Performance on the [-partitive] sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

	Level	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Type 1 [+definite, - partitive, +specific]	Low- proficiency	30	2.73	1.31	58	- 6.80	.000*
	High- proficiency	30	4.56	.67			

*p<0.05

	Level	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Type 2 [+definite, - partitive, - specific]	Low- proficiency	30	2.80	1.34	58	- 4.68	.000*
	High- proficiency	30	4.20	.92			

*p<0.05

	Level	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Type 3 [-definite, - partitive, +specific]	Low- proficiency	30	2.73	1.46	58	- 4.66	.000*
	High- proficiency	30	4.16	.83			

*p<0.05

	Level	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Type 4 [-definite, - partitive, -specific]	Low- proficiency	30	3.06	1.41	58	- 4.28	.000*
	High- proficiency	30	4.30	.70			

*p<0.05

APPENDIX D

Performance on the [-partitive] sentences on the basis of proficiency levels

	Level	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Type 5 [-definite, +partitive, +specific]	Low- proficiency	30	2.90	1.42	58	- 3.4	.001*
	High- proficiency	30	3.93	.82			

*p<0.05

	Level	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Type 6 [-definite, +partitive, +specific]	Low- proficiency	30	3.10	1.26	58	- 4.4	.000*
	High- proficiency	30	4.33	.84			

*p<0.05

APPENDIX E

Performance on *definiteness* on the basis of all participants.

	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Type 1 [+definite, - partitive, +specific]	60	3.65	1.38	118	.791	.431
Type 3 [-definite, - partitive, +specific]	60	3.45	1.38			

APPENDIX F

Performance on *definiteness* on the basis of proficiency levels

	Level	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	p
Type 1 [+definite, - partitive, +specific] Type 3 [-definite, - partitive, +specific]	Low- proficiency	60	2.73	1.37	118	-7.99	.000*
	High- proficiency	60	4.36	.78			

*p<0.05

APPENDIX G

Participation by departments

	Low-proficiency Group	High-proficiency Group
Department	- The Department of Basic English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physics - Chemistry - Early Childhood Education - Industrial Engineering - Psychology - Elementary Mathematics Education - Political Science and Public Administration - Chemical Engineering - Mechanical Engineering - Electrical and Electronics Engineering - Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering - Environmental Engineering